

PRINCIPLES
OF
GEOLOGY:

BEING

AN INQUIRY HOW FAR THE FORMER CHANGES OF THE
EARTH'S SURFACE ARE REFERABLE TO
CAUSES NOW IN OPERATION.

BY

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"The inhabitants of the globe, like all the other parts of it, are subject to change. It is not only the individual that perishes, but whole species."

"A change in the animal kingdom seems to be a part of the order of nature, and is visible in instances to which human power cannot have extended."—PLAYFAIR, *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory*, § 413.

"The stony rocks are not primeval, but the daughters of Time."—LINNÆUS, *Syst. Nat.*, Ed. 5. Stockholm, 1748, p. 219.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

FIRST AMERICAN,

FROM THE FIFTH AND LAST LONDON EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

JAMES KAY, JUN. & BROTHER, 122 CHESTNUT STREET.

PITTSBURGH: JOHN I. KAY & CO.

1837.

Entered according to the act of congress, in the year 1837, by James Kay, Jun. & Brother, in the clerk's office of the district court of the United States in and for the eastern district of Pennsylvania.



Philadelphia:
Printed by James Kay, Jun. & Brother,
122 Chestnut Street.

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PRINCIPLES OF GEOLOGY.

BOOK III.—(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER V.

LAWS WHICH REGULATE THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIES.

Analogy of climate not attended with identity of species—Botanical geography—Stations—Habitations—Distinct provinces of indigenous plants—Vegetation of islands—Marine vegetation (p. 13.)—In what manner plants become diffused—Effects of wind, rivers, marine currents—Agency of animals (p. 18.)—Many seeds pass through the stomachs of animals and birds undigested—Agency of man in the dispersion of plants, both voluntary and involuntary (p. 21.)—Its analogy to that of the inferior animals.

NEXT to determining the question whether species have a real existence, the consideration of the laws which regulate their geographical distribution is a subject of primary importance to the geologist. It is only by studying these laws with attention, by observing the positions which groups of species occupy at present, and inquiring how these may be varied in the course of time by migrations, by changes in physical geography, and other causes, that we can hope to learn whether the duration of species be limited, or in what manner the state of the animate world is affected by the endless vicissitudes of the inanimate.

Different regions inhabited by distinct species.—That different regions of the globe are inhabited by entirely distinct animals and plants, is a fact which has been familiar to all naturalists since Buffon first pointed out the want of *specific* identity between the land quadrupeds of America and those of the Old World. The same phenomenon has, in later times, been forced in a striking manner upon our attention, by the examination of New Holland, where the indigenous species of animals and plants

were found to be, almost without exception, distinct from those known in other parts of the world.

But the extent of this parcelling out of the globe amongst different *nations*, as they have been termed, of plants and animals—the universality of a phenomenon so extraordinary and unexpected, may be considered as one of the most interesting facts clearly established by the advance of modern science.

Scarcely fourteen hundred species of plants appear to have been known and described by the Greeks, Romans, and Arabians. At present, more than three thousand species are enumerated, as natives of our own island.* In other parts of the world there have been collected, perhaps, upwards of seventy thousand species. It was not to be supposed, therefore, that the ancients should have acquired any correct notions respecting what may be called the geography of plants, although the influence of climate on the character of the vegetation could hardly have escaped their observation.

Antecedently to investigation, there was no reason for presuming that the vegetable productions, growing wild in the eastern hemisphere, should be unlike those of the western, in the same latitude; nor that the plants of the Cape of Good Hope should be unlike those of the South of Europe; situations where the climate is little dissimilar. The contrary supposition would have seemed more probable, and we might have anticipated an almost perfect identity in the animals and plants which inhabit corresponding parallels of latitude. The discovery, therefore, that each separate region of the globe, both of the land and water, is occupied by distinct groups of species, and that most of the exceptions to this general rule may be referred to disseminating causes now in operation, is eminently calculated to excite curiosity, and to stimulate us to seek some hypothesis respecting the first introduction of species which may be reconcileable with such phenomena.

Botanical geography.—A comparison of the *plants* of different regions of the globe affords results more to be depended upon in the present state of our knowledge than those relating to the animal kingdom, because the science of botany is more advanced, and probably comprehends a great proportion of the total number of the vegetable productions of the whole earth. Humboldt, in several eloquent passages of his *Personal Narrative*, was among the first to promulgate philosophical views on this subject. Every hemisphere, says this traveller, produces plants of different species; and it is not by the diversity of climates that we can attempt to explain why equinoctial Africa has no lauriniæ, and the New World no heaths; why the calceolariæ are found only in the southern

* Barton's *Lectures on the Geography of Plants*, p. 2.

hemisphere; why the birds of the continent of India glow with colours less splendid than the birds of the hot parts of America; finally, why the tiger is peculiar to Asia, and the ornithorhynchus to New Holland.*

“We can conceive,” he adds, “that a small number of the families of plants, for instance, the musaceæ and the palms, cannot belong to very cold regions, on account of their internal structure and the importance of certain organs; but we cannot explain why no one of the family of melastomas vegetates north of the parallel of thirty degrees; or why no rose-tree belongs to the southern hemisphere. Analogy of climates is often found in the two continents without identity of productions.”†

The luminous essay of De Candolle on “Botanical Geography” presents us with the fruits of his own researches and those of Humboldt, Brown, and other eminent botanists, so arranged, that the principal phenomena of the distribution of plants are exhibited in connexion with the causes to which they are chiefly referable.‡ “It might not, perhaps, be difficult,” observes this writer, “to find two points in the United States and in Europe, or in equinoctial America and Africa, which present all the same circumstances: as, for example, the same temperature, the same height above the sea, a similar soil, an equal dose of humidity; yet nearly all, *perhaps all*, the plants in these two similar localities shall be distinct. A certain degree of analogy, indeed, of aspect, and even of structure, might very possibly be discoverable between the plants of the two localities in question; but the *species* would in general be different. Circumstances, therefore, different from those which now determine the *stations*, have had an influence on the *habitations* of plants.”

Stations and habitations of plants.—As I shall frequently have occasion to speak of the *stations* and *habitations* of plants in the technical sense in which the terms are used in the above passage, I may remind the geologist that station indicates the peculiar nature of the locality where each species is accustomed to grow, and has reference to climate, soil, humidity, light, elevation above the sea, and other analogous circumstances; whereas, by habitation is meant a general indication of the country where a plant grows wild. Thus the *station* of a plant may be a salt-marsh, in a temperate climate, a hill-side, the bed of the sea, or a stagnant pool. Its *habitation* may be Europe, North America, or New Holland between the tropics. The study of stations has been styled the topography, that of habitations the geography, of botany. The terms thus defined, express each a distinct class of ideas, which have been often confounded together, and which are equally applicable in zoology.

In further illustration of the principle above alluded to, that difference of longitude, independently of any influence of temperature, is accompa-

* Pers. Nar., vol. v. p. 180.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ Essai Élémentaire de Géographie Botanique. Extrait du 18^{me} vol. du Dict. des Sci. Nat.

nied by a great, and sometimes a complete diversity in the species of plants, De Candolle observes, that, out of 2891 species of phænogamous plants described by Pursh, in the United States, there are only 385 which are found in northern or temperate Europe. MM. Humboldt and Bonpland, in all their travels through equinoctial America, found only twenty-four species (these being all cyperacea and graminea) common to America and any part of the Old World. On comparing New Holland with Europe, Mr. Brown ascertained that, out of 4100 species, discovered in Australia, there were only 166 common to Europe, and of this small number there were some few which may have been transported thither by man.

But it is still more remarkable, that in the more widely separated parts the ancient continent, notwithstanding the existence of an uninterrupted land communication, the diversity in the specific character of the respective vegetations is almost as striking. Thus there is found one assemblage of species in China, another in the countries bordering the Black Sea and the Caspian, a third in those surrounding the Mediterranean, a fourth in the great platforms of Siberia and Tartary, and so forth.

The distinctness of the groups of indigenous plants, in the same parallel of latitude, is greatest where continents are disjoined by a wide expanse of ocean. In the northern hemisphere, near the pole, where the extremities of Europe, Asia, and America unite or approach near to one another, a considerable number of the same species of plants are found, common to the three continents. But it has been remarked, that these plants, which are thus so widely diffused in the Arctic regions, are also found in the chain of the Aleutian islands, which stretch almost across from America to Asia, and which may probably have served as the channel of communication for the partial blending of the Floras of the adjoining regions. It has, indeed, been found to be a general rule, that plants found at two points very remote from each other, occur also in places intermediate.

Vegetation of islands.—In islands very distant from continents the total number of plants is comparatively small; but a large proportion of the species are such as occur nowhere else. In so far as the flora of such islands is not peculiar to them, it contains, in general, species common to the nearest main lands.*

The islands of the great southern ocean exemplify these rules; the easternmost containing more American, and the western more Indian plants.† Madeira and Teneriffe contain many species, and even entire genera, peculiar to them; but they have also plants in common with Portugal, Spain, the Azores, and the north-west coast of Africa.‡

* Prichard, vol. i. p. 36. Brown, Appendix to Flinders.

† Forster, Observations, &c.

‡ Humboldt, Pers. Nar., vol. i. p. 270 of the translation. Prichard, Phys. Hist. of Mankind, vol. i. p. 37.

In the Canaries, out of 533 species of phænogamous plants, it is said that 310 are peculiar to these islands, and the rest identical with those of the African continent; but in the Flora of St. Helena, which is so far distant even from the western shores of Africa, there have been found, out of sixty-one native species, only *two or three* which are to be found in any other part of the globe.

Number of botanical provinces.—De Candolle has enumerated twenty great botanical provinces inhabited by indigenous or aboriginal plants; and although many of these contain a variety of species which are common to several others, and sometimes to places very remote, yet the lines of demarcation are, upon the whole, astonishingly well defined.* Nor is it likely that the bearing of the evidence on which these general views are founded will ever be materially affected, since they are already confirmed by the examination of seventy or eighty thousand species of plants.

The entire change of opinion which the contemplation of these phenomena has brought about is worthy of remark. The first travellers were persuaded that they should find, in distant regions, the plants of their own country, and they took a pleasure in giving them the same names. It was some time before this illusion was dissipated; but so fully sensible did botanists at last become of the extreme smallness of the number of phænogamous plants common to different continents, that the ancient Floras fell into disrepute. All grew diffident of the pretended identifications; and we now find that every naturalist is inclined to examine each supposed exception with scrupulous severity.† If they admit the fact, they begin to speculate on the mode whereby the seeds may have been transported from one country into the other, or inquire on which of two continents the plant was indigenous, assuming that a species, like an individual, cannot have two birth-places.

Marine vegetation.—The marine vegetation is less known; but we learn from Lamouroux, that it is divisible into different systems, apparently as distinct as those on the land, notwithstanding that the uniformity of temperature is so much greater in the ocean. For on that ground we might have expected the phenomenon of partial distribution to have been far less striking, since climate is, in general, so influential a cause in checking the dispersion of species from one zone to another.

The number of hydrophytes, as they are termed, is very considerable, and their stations are found to be infinitely more varied than could have been anticipated; for while some plants are covered and uncovered daily by the tide, others live in abysses of the ocean, at the extraordinary depth of one thousand feet; and although in such situations there must reign

* See a farther subdivision, by which twenty-seven provinces are made, by M. Alph. De Candolle, son of De Candolle. *Monogr. des Campanulées*. Paris, 1830.

† De Candolle, *Essai Elémén. de Géog. Botan.*, p. 45.

darkness more profound than night, at least to our organs, many of these vegetables are highly coloured. From the analogy of terrestrial plants we might have inferred, that the colouring of the algæ was derived from the influence of the solar rays ; yet we are compelled to doubt when we reflect how feeble must be the rays which penetrate to these great depths.

The subaqueous vegetation of the Mediterranean is, upon the whole, distinct from that of the Atlantic on the west, and that part of the Arabian Gulf which is immediately contiguous on the south. Other botanical provinces are found in the West Indian seas, including the Gulf of Mexico ; in the ocean which washes the shores of South America ; in the Indian Ocean and its gulfs ; in the seas of Australia ; and in the Atlantic basin, from the 40th degree of north latitude to the pole. There are very few species common to the coast of Europe and the United States of North America, and none common to the Straits of Magellan and the shores of Van Diemen's Land.

It must not be overlooked, that the distinctness alluded to between the vegetation of these several countries relates strictly to *species*, and not to forms. In regard to the numerical preponderance of certain forms, and many peculiarities of internal structure, there is a marked agreement in the vegetable productions of districts placed in corresponding latitudes, and under similar physical circumstances, however remote their position. Thus there are innumerable points of analogy between the vegetation of the Brazils, equinoctial Africa, and India ; and there are also points of difference wherein the plants of these regions are distinguishable from all extra-tropical groups. But there are very few species common to the three continents. The same may be said, if we compare the plants of the Straits of Magellan with those of Van Diemen's Land, or the vegetation of the United States with that of the middle of Europe : the species are distinct, but the forms are in a great degree analogous.

Let us now consider what means of diffusion, independently of the agency of man, are possessed by plants, whereby, in the course of ages, they may be enabled to stray from one of the botanical provinces above mentioned to another, and to establish new colonies at a great distance from their birth-place.

Manner in which plants become diffused.—Winds.—The principal of the inanimate agents provided by nature for scattering the seeds of plants over the globe, are the movements of the atmosphere and of the ocean, and the constant flow of water from the mountains to the sea. To begin with the winds : a great number of seeds are furnished with downy and feathery appendages, enabling them, when ripe, to float in the air, and to be wafted easily to great distances by the most gentle breeze. Other plants are fitted for dispersion by means of an attached wing, as in the case of the fir-tree, so that they are caught up by the wind as they fall from the cone, and are carried to a distance. Amongst the comparatively

small number of plants known to Linnæus, no less than 138 genera are enumerated as having winged seeds.

As winds often prevail for days, weeks, or even months together, in the same direction, these means of transportation may sometimes be without limits; and even the heavier grains may be borne through considerable spaces, in a very short time, during ordinary tempests; for strong gales, which can sweep along grains of sand, often move at the rate of about forty miles an hour, and if the storm be very violent, at the rate of fifty-six miles.* The hurricanes of tropical regions, which root up trees and, throw down buildings, sweep along at the rate of ninety miles an hour; so that, for however short a time they prevail, they may carry even the heavier fruits and seeds over friths and seas of considerable width, and, doubtless, are often the means of introducing into islands the vegetation of adjoining continents. Whirlwinds are also instrumental in bearing along heavy vegetable substances to considerable distances. Slight ones may frequently be observed in our fields, in summer, carrying up haystacks into the air, and then letting fall small tufts of hay far and wide over the country; but they are sometimes so powerful as to dry up lakes and ponds, and to break off the boughs of trees, and carry them up in a whirling column of air.

Franklin tells us, in one of his letters, that he saw, in Maryland, a whirlwind which began by taking up the dust which lay in the road, in the form of a sugar-loaf with the pointed end downwards, and soon after grew to the height of forty or fifty feet, being twenty or thirty in diameter. It advanced in a direction contrary to the wind; and although the rotatory motion of the column was surprisingly rapid, its onward progress was sufficiently slow to allow a man to keep pace with it on foot. Franklin followed it on horseback, accompanied by his son, for three-quarters of a mile, and saw it enter a wood, where it twisted and turned round large trees with surprising force. These were carried up in a spiral line, and were seen flying in the air, together with boughs and innumerable leaves, which, from their height, appeared reduced to the apparent size of flies. As this cause operates at different intervals of time throughout a great portion of the earth's surface, it may be the means of bearing not only plants but insects, land-testacea and their eggs, with many other species of animals, to points which they could never otherwise have reached, and from which they may then begin to propagate themselves again as from a new centre.

Distribution of cryptogamous plants.—It has been found that a great numerical proportion of the exceptions to the limitation of species to certain quarters of the globe, occur in the various tribes of cryptogamic plants. Linnæus observed that, as the germs of plants of this class, such as mosses,

* Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes.

fungi, and lichens, consist of an impalpable powder, the particles of which are scarcely visible to the naked eye, there is no difficulty to account for their being dispersed throughout the atmosphere, and carried to every point of the globe, where there is a station fitted for them. Lichens in particular ascend to great elevations, sometimes growing two thousand feet above the line of perpetual snow, at the utmost limits of vegetation, and where the mean temperature is nearly at the freezing point. This elevated position must contribute greatly to facilitate the dispersion of those buoyant particles of which their fructification consists.*

Some have inferred, from the springing up of mushrooms whenever particular soils and decomposed organic matter are mixed together, that the production of fungi is accidental, and not analogous to that of perfect plants.† But Fries, whose authority on these questions is entitled to the highest respect, has shown the fallacy of this argument in favour of the old doctrine of equivocal generation. “The sporules of fungi,” says this naturalist, “are so infinite, that in a single individual of *Reticularia maxima*, I have counted above ten millions, and so subtile as to be scarcely visible, often resembling thin smoke; so light that they may be raised perhaps by evaporation into the atmosphere, and dispersed in so many ways by the attraction of the sun, by insects, wind, elasticity, adhesion, &c., that it is difficult to conceive a place from which they may be excluded.”

Agency of rivers and currents.—In considering, in the next place, the instrumentality of the aqueous agents of dispersion, I cannot do better than cite the words of one of our ablest botanical writers. “The mountain stream or torrent,” observes Keith, “washes down to the valley the seeds which may accidentally fall into it, or which it may happen to sweep from its banks when it suddenly overflows them. The broad and majestic river, winding along the extensive plain, and traversing the continents of the world, conveys to the distance of many hundreds of miles the seeds that may have vegetated at its source. Thus the southern shores of the Baltic are visited by seeds which grew in the interior of Germany; and the western shores of the Atlantic by seeds that have been generated in the interior of America.‡ Fruits, moreover, indigenous to America and the West Indies, such as that of the *Mimosa scandens*, the cashew-nut, and others, have been known to be drifted across the Atlantic by the Gulf stream, on the western coasts of Europe, in such a state that they might have vegetated had the climate and soil been favourable. Among these the *Guilandina Bonduc*, a leguminous plant, is particularly mentioned as having been raised from a seed found on the west coast of Ireland.§

* Linn., *Tour in Lapland*, vol. ii. p. 282.

† Lindley, *Introd. to Nat. Syst. of Botany*, who cites Fries.

‡ *System of Physiological Botany*, vol. ii. p. 405.

§ Brown, *Append. to Tuckey*, No. V. p. 481.

Sir Hans Sloane states, that several kinds of beans cast ashore on the Orkney Isles, and the coast of Ireland, are derived from trees which grow in the West Indies, and many of them in Jamaica. He conjectures that they may have been conveyed by rivers into the sea, and then by the Gulf stream to greater distances, in the same manner as the sea-weed called *Lenticula marina*, or Sargasso, which grows on the rocks about Jamaica, is known to be "carried by the winds and current towards the coast of Florida, and thence into the North American ocean, where it lies very thick on the surface of the sea."*

The absence of liquid matter in the composition of seeds renders them comparatively insensible to heat and cold, so that they may be carried without detriment through climates where the plants themselves would instantly perish. Such is their power of resisting the effects of heat, that Spallanzani mentions some seeds that germinated after having been boiled in water.† Sir John Herschel informs me that he has sown at the Cape of Good Hope the seeds of the *Acacia lophanta* after they had remained for twelve hours in water of 140° Fahrenheit, and they germinated far more rapidly than unboiled seeds. He also states that an eminent botanist, Baron Ludwig, could not get the seeds of a species of cedar to grow at the Cape till they were thoroughly boiled.

When, therefore, a strong gale, after blowing violently off the land for a time, dies away, and the seeds alight upon the surface of the waters, or wherever the ocean, by eating away the sea-cliffs, throws down into its waves plants which would never otherwise approach the shores, the tides and currents become active instruments in assisting the dissemination of almost all classes of the vegetable kingdom.

In a collection of six hundred plants from the neighbourhood of the river Zaire, in Africa, Mr. Brown found that thirteen species were also met with on the opposite shores of Guiana and Brazil. He remarked that most of these plants were found only on the lower parts of the river Zaire, and were chiefly such as produced seeds capable of retaining their vitality a long time in the currents of the ocean.

The migration of plants aided by islands.—Islands, moreover, and even the smallest rocks, play an important part in aiding such migrations; for when seeds alight upon them from the atmosphere, or are thrown up by the surf, they often vegetate, and supply the winds and waves with a repetition of new and uninjured crops of fruit and seeds. These may afterwards pursue their course through the atmosphere, or along the surface of the sea, in the same direction. The number of plants found at any given time on an islet affords us no test whatever of the extent to which it may have co-operated towards this end, since a variety of species

* Phil. Trans., 1696.

† System of Physiological Botany, vol. ii. p. 403.

may first thrive there and then perish, and be followed by other chance-comers like themselves.

Currents and winds in the arctic regions drift along icebergs covered with an alluvial soil, on which herbs and pine-saplings are seen growing, which may often continue to vegetate on some distant shore where the ice-island is stranded.

Dispersion of marine plants.—With respect to marine vegetation, the seeds, being in their native element, may remain immersed in water without injury for indefinite periods, so that there is no difficulty in conceiving the diffusion of species wherever uncongenial climates, contrary currents, and other causes, do not interfere. All are familiar with the sight of the floating sea-weed,

“ Flung from the rock on ocean’s foam to sail,
Where’er the surge may sweep, the tempest’s breath prevail.”

Remarkable accumulations of that species of sea-weed generally known as gulf-weed, or sargasso, occur on each side of the equator in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. Columbus and other navigators, who first encountered these banks of algæ in the Northern Atlantic, compared them to vast inundated meadows, and state that they retarded the progress of their vessels. The most extensive bank is a little west of the meridian of Fayal, one of the Azores, between latitudes 35° and 36° : violent north winds sometimes prevail in this space, and drive the sea-weed to low latitudes, as far as the 24th or even the 20th degree.*

The hollow pod-like receptacles in which the seeds of many algæ are lodged, and the filaments attached to the seed-vessels of others, seem intended to give buoyancy; and I may observe, that these hydrophytes are in general *proliferous*, so that the smallest fragment of a branch can be developed into a perfect plant. The seeds, moreover, of the greater number of species are enveloped with a mucous matter like that which surrounds the eggs of some fish, and which not only protects them from injury, but serves to attach them to floating bodies or to rocks.

Agency of animals in the distribution of plants.—But we have as yet considered part only of the fertile resources of nature for conveying seeds to a distance from their place of growth. The various tribes of animals are busily engaged in furthering an object whence they derive such important advantages. Sometimes an express provision is found in the structure of seeds to enable them to adhere firmly by prickles, hooks, and hairs, to the coats of animals, or feathers of the winged tribe, to which they remain attached for weeks, or even months, and are borne along into every region whither birds or quadrupeds may migrate. Linæus enumerates fifty genera of plants, and the number now known to

* Greville, Introduction to *Algæ Britannicæ*, p. 12.

botanists is much greater, which are armed with hooks, by which, when ripe, they adhere to the coats of animals. Most of these vegetables, he remarks, require a soil enriched with dung. Few have failed to mark the locks of wool hanging on the thorn-bushes, wherever the sheep pass, and it is probable that the wolf or lion never give chase to herbivorous animals without being unconsciously subservient to this part of the vegetable economy.

A deer has strayed from the herd when browsing on some rich pasture, when he is suddenly alarmed by the approach of his foe. He instantly takes to flight, dashing through many a thicket, and swimming across many a river and lake. The seeds of the herbs and shrubs which have adhered to his smoking flanks, are washed off again by the waters. The thorny spray is torn off, and fixes itself in his hairy coat, until brushed off again in other thickets and copses. Even on the spot where the victim is devoured many of the seeds which he had swallowed immediately before the chase may be left on the ground uninjured, and ready to spring up in a new soil.

The passage, indeed, of undigested seeds through the stomachs of animals is one of the most efficient causes of the dissemination of plants, and is of all others, perhaps, the most likely to be overlooked. Few are ignorant that a portion of the oats eaten by a horse preserve their germinating faculty in the dung. The fact of their being still nutritious is not lost on the sagacious rook. To many, says Linnæus, it seems extraordinary, and something of a prodigy, that when a field is well tilled and sown with the best wheat, it frequently produces darnel or the wild oat, especially if it be manured with new dung; they do not consider that the fertility of the smaller seeds is not destroyed in the stomachs of animals.*

Agency of birds.—Some birds of the order Passeres devour the seeds of plants in great quantities, which they eject again in very distant places, without destroying its faculty of vegetation; thus a flight of larks will fill the cleanest field with a great quantity of various kinds of plants, as the melilot trefoil (*Medicago lupulina*), and others whose seeds are so heavy that the wind is not able to scatter them to any distance.† In like manner, the blackbird and missel-thrush, when they devour berries in too great quantities, are known to consign them to the earth undigested in their excrement.‡

Pulpy fruits serve quadrupeds and birds as food, while their seeds, often hard and indigestible, pass uninjured through the intestines, and are deposited far from their original place of growth in a condition peculiarly fit for vegetation.§ So well are the farmers, in some parts of England,

* Linnæus, Amæn. Acad., vol. ii. p. 409.

† Amæn. Acad., vol. iv. Essay 75, § 8.

‡ Ibid., vol. vi. § 22.

§ Smith's Introd. to Phys. and Syst. Botany, p. 304. 1807.

aware of this fact, that when they desire to raise a quickset hedge in the shortest possible time, they feed turkeys with the haws of the common white-thorn (*Cratægus Oxyacantha*), and then sow the stones which are ejected in their excrement, whereby they gain an entire year in the growth of the plant.* Birds when they pluck cherries, sloes, and haws, fly away with them to some convenient place; and when they have devoured the fruit, drop the stone into the ground. Captain Cook, in his account of the volcanic island of Tanna, one of the New Hebrides, which he visited in his second voyage, makes the following interesting observation:—"Mr. Forster, in his botanical excursion this day, shot a pigeon, in the craw of which was a wild nutmeg. He took some pains to find the tree on this island, but his efforts were without success."† It is easy, therefore, to perceive, that birds in their migrations to great distances, and even across seas, may transport seeds to new isles and continents.

The sudden deaths to which great numbers of frugivorous birds are annually exposed must not be omitted as auxiliary to the transportation of seeds to new habitations. When the sea retires from the shore, and leaves fruits and seeds on the beach, or in the mud of estuaries, it might, by the returning tide, wash them away again, or destroy them by long immersion; but when they are gathered by land birds which frequent the sea-side, or by waders and water-fowl, they are often borne inland; and if the bird to whose crop they have been consigned is killed, they may be left to grow up far from the sea. Let such an accident happen but once in a century, or a thousand years, it will be sufficient to spread many of the plants from one continent to another; for in estimating the activity of these causes, we must not consider whether they act slowly in relation to the period of our observation, but in reference to the duration of species in general.

Let us trace the operation of this cause in connexion with others. A tempestuous wind bears the seeds of a plant many miles through the air, and then delivers them to the ocean; the oceanic current drifts them to a distant continent; by the fall of the tide they become the food of numerous birds, and one of these is seized by a hawk or eagle, which, soaring across hill and dale to a place of retreat, leaves, after devouring its prey, the unpalatable seeds to spring up and flourish in a new soil.

The machinery before adverted to is so capable of disseminating seeds over almost unbounded spaces, that were we more intimately acquainted with the economy of nature, we might probably explain all the instances which occur of the aberration of plants to great distances from their native countries. The real difficulty which must present itself to every one who contemplates the present geographical distribution of species, is

* This information was communicated to me by Professor Henslow, of Cambridge.

† Book iii. ch. iv.

the small number of exceptions to the rule of the non-intermixture of different groups of plants. Why have they not, supposing them to have been ever so distinct originally, become more blended and confounded together in the lapse of ages?

Agency of man in the dispersion of plants.—But in addition to all the agents already enumerated as instrumental in diffusing plants over the globe, we have still to consider man—one of the most important of all. He transports with him, into every region, the vegetables which he cultivates for his wants; and is the involuntary means of spreading a still greater number which are useless to him, or even noxious. “When the introduction of cultivated plants,” says De Candolle, “is of recent date, there is no difficulty in tracing their origin; but when it is of high antiquity, we are often ignorant of the true country of the plants on which we feed. No one contests the American origin of the maize or the potato; nor the origin, in the old world, of the coffee-tree, and of wheat. But there are certain objects of culture, of very ancient date, between the tropics, such, for example, as the banana, of which the origin cannot be verified. Armies, in modern times, have been known to carry, in all directions, grain and cultivated vegetables from one extremity of Europe to the other; and thus have shown us how, in more ancient times, the conquests of Alexander, the distant expeditions of the Romans, and afterwards the crusades, may have transported many plants from one part of the world to the other.”*

But, besides the plants used in agriculture, the number which have been naturalized by accident, or which man has spread unintentionally, is considerable. One of our old authors, Josselyn, gives a catalogue of such plants as had, in his time, sprung up in the colony since the English planted and kept cattle in New England. They were two-and-twenty in number. The common nettle was the first which the settlers noticed; and the plantain was called by the Indians “Englishman’s foot,” as if it sprung from their footsteps.†

“We have introduced every where,” observes De Candolle, “some weeds which grow among our various kinds of wheat, and which have been received, perhaps, originally from Asia along with them. Thus, together with the Barbary wheat, the inhabitants of the south of Europe have sown, for many ages, the plants of Algiers and Tunis. With the wools and cottons of the East, or of Barbary, there are often brought into France the grains of exotic plants, some of which naturalize themselves. Of this I will cite a striking example. There is, at the gate of Montpellier, a meadow set apart for drying foreign wool *after it has been washed*. There hardly passes a year without foreign plants being found naturalized

* De Candolle, *Essai Elémen*, &c., p. 50.

† Quarterly Review, vol. xxx. p. 8.

in this drying-ground. I have gathered there *Centaurea parviflora*, *Psoralea palæstina*, and *Hypericum crispum*." This fact is not only illustrative of the aid which man lends inadvertently to the propagation of plants, but it also demonstrates the multiplicity of seeds which are borne about in the woolly and hairy coats of wild animals.

The same botanist mentions instances of plants naturalized in seaports by the ballast of ships; and several examples of others which have spread through Europe from botanical gardens, so as to have become more common than many indigenous species.

It is scarcely a century, says Linnæus, since the Canadian erigeron, or flea-bane, was brought from America to the botanical garden at Paris: and already the seeds have been carried by the winds, so that it is diffused over France, the British islands, Italy, Sicily, Holland, and Germany.* Several others are mentioned by the Swedish naturalist, as having been dispersed by similar means. The common thorn-apple (*Datura Stramonium*), observes Willdenow, now grows as a noxious weed throughout all Europe, with the exception of Sweden, Lapland, and Russia. It came from the East Indies and Abyssinia to us, and was so universally spread by certain quacks, who used its seed as an emetic.†

In hot and ill-cultivated countries, such naturalizations take place more easily. Thus the *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, sown by Mr. Burchell on a point of St. Helena, multiplied so in four years as to become one of the commonest weeds in the island.‡

The most remarkable proof, says De Candolle, of the extent to which man is unconsciously the instrument of dispersing and naturalizing species, is found in the fact, that in New Holland, America, and the Cape of Good Hope, the aboriginal European species exceed in number all the others which have come from any distant regions; so that, in this instance, the influence of man has surpassed that of all the other causes which tend to disseminate plants to remote districts.

Although we are but slightly acquainted, as yet, with the extent of our instrumentality in naturalizing species, yet the facts ascertained afford no small reason to suspect, that the number which we introduce unintentionally exceeds all those transported by design. Nor is it unnatural to suppose that the functions, which the inferior beings, extirpated by man, once discharged in the economy of nature, should devolve upon the human race. If we derive many birds of passage from different countries, we are probably required to fulfil their office of carrying seeds, eggs of fish, insects, mollusks, and other creatures, to distant regions; if we destroy quadrupeds, we must replace them, not merely as consumers of the animal and vegetable substances which they devoured, but as dissemi-

* Essay on the Habitable Earth, Amœn. Acad., vol. ii. p. 409.

† Principles of Botany, p. 389.

‡ Ibid.

nators of plants, and of the inferior classes of the animal kingdom. I do not mean to insinuate that the very same changes which man brings about would have taken place by means of the agency of other species, but merely that he supersedes a certain number of agents; and so far as he disperses plants unintentionally, or against his will, his intervention is strictly analogous to that of the species so extirpated.

I may observe, moreover, that if, at former periods, the animals inhabiting any given district have been partially altered by the extinction of some species, and the introduction of others, whether by new creations or by immigration, a change must have taken place in regard to the particular plants conveyed about with them to foreign countries. As, for example, when one set of migratory birds is substituted for another, the countries from and to which seeds are transported are immediately changed. Vicissitudes, therefore, analogous to those which man has occasioned, may have previously attended the springing up of new relations between species in the vegetable and animal worlds.

It may also be remarked, that if man is the most active agent in enlarging, so also is he in circumscribing, the geographical boundaries of particular plants. He promotes the migration of some, he retards that of other species, so that, while in many respects he appears to be exerting his power to blend and confound the various provinces of indigenous species, he is, in other ways, instrumental in obstructing the fusion into one group of the inhabitants of contiguous provinces.

Thus, for example, when two botanical regions exist in the same great continent, such as *the European region*, comprehending the central parts of Europe and those surrounding the Mediterranean, and *the Oriental region*, as it has been termed, embracing the countries adjoining the Black Sea and the Caspian, the interposition between these of thousands of square miles of cultivated lands, opposes a new and powerful barrier against the mutual interchange of indigenous plants. Botanists are well aware that garden plants naturalize and diffuse themselves with great facility in comparatively unreclaimed countries, but spread themselves slowly and with difficulty in districts highly cultivated. There are many obvious causes for this difference: by drainage and culture the natural variety of stations is diminished, and those stray individuals by which the passage of a species from one fit station to another is effected, are no sooner detected by the agriculturist, than they are uprooted as weeds. The larger shrubs and trees, in particular, can scarcely ever escape observation, when they have attained a certain size, and will rarely fail to be cut down if unprofitable.

The same observations are applicable to the interchange of the insects, birds, and quadrupeds of two regions situated like those above alluded to. No beasts of prey are permitted to make their way across the intervening arable tracts. Many birds, and hundreds of insects, which would have

found some palatable food amongst the various herbs and trees of the primeval wilderness, are unable to subsist on the olive, the vine, the wheat, and a few trees and grasses favoured by man. In addition, therefore, to his direct intervention, man, in this case, operates indirectly to impede the dissemination of plants, by intercepting the migrations of animals, many of which would otherwise have been active in transporting seeds from one province to another.

Whether, in the vegetable kingdom, the influence of man will tend, after a considerable lapse of ages, to render the geographical range of *species in general* more extended, as De Candolle seems to anticipate, or whether the compensating agency above alluded to will not counterbalance the exceptions caused by our naturalizations, admits at least of some doubt. In the attempt to form an estimate on this subject, we must be careful not to underrate, or almost overlook, as some appear to have done, the influence of man in checking the diffusion of plants, and restricting their distribution to narrower limits.

CHAPTER VI.

LAWS WHICH REGULATE THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIES—*continued.*

Geographical distribution of animals—Buffon on specific distinctness of quadrupeds of the old and new world—Different regions of indigenous mammalia—Quadrupeds in islands—Range of the Cetacea—Dispersion of quadrupeds (p. 28.)—their powers of swimming—Migratory instincts—Drifting of animals on ice-floes (p. 32.)—On floating islands of drift-timber—Migrations of Cetacea—Habitations of birds (p. 35.)—Their migrations and facilities of diffusion—Distribution of reptiles, and their powers of dissemination.

Geographical distribution of animals.—ALTHOUGH in speculating on “philosophical possibilities,” said Buffon, “the same temperature might have been expected, all other circumstances being equal, to produce the same beings in different parts of the globe, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, yet it is an undoubted fact, that when America was discovered, its indigenous quadrupeds were all dissimilar to those previously known in the old world. The elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the cameleopard, the camel, the dromedary, the buffalo, the horse,

the ass, the lion, the tiger, the apes, the baboons, and a number of other mammalia, were nowhere to be met with on the new continent; while in the old, the American species, of the same great class, were nowhere to be seen—the tapir, the lama, the pecari, the jaguar, the cougar, the agouti, the paca, the coati, and the sloth.”

These phenomena, although few in number relatively to the whole animate creation, were so striking and so positive in their nature, that the great French naturalist caught sight at once of a general law in the geographical distribution of organic beings, namely, the limitation of groups of distinct species to regions separated from the rest of the globe by certain natural barriers. It was, therefore, in a truly philosophical spirit that, relying on the clearness of the evidence obtained respecting the larger quadrupeds, he ventured to call in question the identifications announced by some contemporary naturalists of species of animals said to be common to the southern extremities of America and Africa.*

Causes which prevent the migration of animals.—The migration of quadrupeds from one part of the globe to another, observes one of our ablest writers, is prevented by uncongenial climates and the branches of the ocean which intersect continents. “Hence, by a reference to the geographical site of countries, we may divide the earth into a certain number of regions fitted to become the abodes of particular groups of animals, and we shall find, on inquiry, that each of these provinces, thus conjecturally marked out, is actually inhabited by a distinct nation of quadrupeds.”†

Where the continents of the old and new world approximate to each other towards the north, the narrow straits which separate them are frozen over in winter, and the distance is further lessened by intervening islands. Thus a passage from one continent to another becomes practicable to such quadrupeds as are fitted to endure the intense cold of the arctic circle. Accordingly, the whole arctic region has become one of the provinces of the animal kingdom, and contains many species common to both the great continents. But the temperate regions of America, which are separated by a wide extent of ocean from those of Europe and Asia, contain each a distinct nation of indigenous quadrupeds. There are three groups of *tropical* mammalia belonging severally to America, Africa, and continental India, each inhabiting lands separated from each other by the ocean.

In Peru and Chili, says Humboldt, the region of the grasses, which is at an elevation of from 12,300 to 15,400 feet, is inhabited by crowds of lama, guanaco, and alpaca. These quadrupeds, which here represent the

* Buffon, vol. v.—On the Virginian Opossum.

† Prichard's Phys. Hist. of Mankind, vol. i. p. 54. In some of the preliminary chapters will be found a sketch of the leading facts illustrative of the geographical distribution of animals, drawn up with the author's usual clearness and ability.

genus camel of the ancient continent, have not extended themselves either to Brazil or Mexico; because, during their journey, they must necessarily have descended into regions that were too hot for them.*

Animals in New Holland.—New Holland is well known to contain a most singular and characteristic assemblage of mammiferous animals, consisting of more than forty species of the marsupial family, or those furnished with a pouch under the belly for their young, of which scarcely any congeners occur elsewhere, except a few species in some islands of the Indian archipelago and the opossums of America. There are, it appears, some examples of marsupial animals in the eastern hemisphere out of the Australian continent. Thus the *Phalangista vulpina* inhabits both Sumatra and New Holland; the *P. ursina* is found in the island of Celebes; *P. chrysorrhoea*, in the Moluccas; *P. maculata*, and *P. cavi-frons*, in Banda and Amboyna.†

This almost exclusive occupation of the Australian continent by the kangaroos and other tribes of pouched animals, although it has justly excited great attention, is a fact, nevertheless, in strict accordance with the general laws of the distribution of species; since, in other parts of the globe, we find peculiarities of form, structure, and habit, in birds, reptiles, insects, or plants, confined entirely to one hemisphere, or one continent, and sometimes to much narrower limits.

In the south of Africa.—The southern region of Africa, where that continent extends into the temperate zone, constitutes another separate zoological province, surrounded as it is on three sides by the ocean, and cut off from the countries of milder climate, in the northern hemisphere, by the intervening torrid zone. In many instances, this region contains the same genera which are found in temperate climates to the northward of the line: but then the southern are different from the northern species.

Thus, in the south we find the quagga and the zebra; in the north, the horse, the ass, and the jiggetai of Asia.

The south of Africa is spread out into fine level plains from the tropic to the Cape; in this region, says Pennant, besides the horse genus, of which five species have been found, there are also peculiar species of rhinoceros, the hog, and the hyrax, among pachydermatous races; and amongst the ruminating, the giraffe, the Cape buffalo, and a variety of remarkable antelopes, as the springbok, the oryx, the gnou, the leucophœ, the pygarga, and several others.‡

In the Indian archipelago.—The Indian archipelago presents peculiar phenomena in regard to its indigenous mammalia, which, in their generic character, recede, in some respects, from that of the animals of the

* Description of the Equatorial Regions.

† Temminck, Mammologie.

‡ Pennant's Hist. of Quadrupeds, cited by Prichard, Phys. Hist. of Mankind, vol. i. p. 66.

Indian continent, and approximate to the African. The Sunda isles contain a hippopotamus, which is wanting in the rivers of Asia; Sumatra, a peculiar species of tapir, and a rhinoceros resembling the African more than the Indian species, but specifically distinguishable from both.*

Beyond the Indian archipelago is an extensive region, including New Guinea, New Britain, and New Ireland, together with the archipelago of Solomon's Islands, the New Hebrides, and Louisiade, and the more remote group of islands in the great southern ocean, which may be considered as forming one zoological province. Although these remarkable countries are extremely fertile in their vegetable productions, they are almost wholly destitute of native warm-blooded quadrupeds, except a few species of bats, and some domesticated animals in the possession of the natives.†

Quadrupeds in islands.—Quadrupeds found on islands situated near the continents generally form a part of the stock of animals belonging to the adjacent mainland; “but small islands remote from continents are in general altogether destitute of land quadrupeds, except such as appear to have been conveyed to them by men. Kerguelen's Land, Juan Fernandez, the Gallapagos, and the Isles de Lobos, are examples of this fact. Among all the groups of fertile islands in the Pacific Ocean, no quadrupeds have been found, except dogs, hogs, rats, and a few bats. The bats have been found in New Zealand and the more westerly groups; they may probably have made their way along the chain of islands which extend from the shores of New Guinea far into the Southern Pacific. The hogs and the dogs appear to have been conveyed by the natives from New Guinea. The Indian islands, near New Guinea, abound in oxen, buffaloes, goats, deer, hogs, dogs, cats, and rats; but none of them are said to have reached New Guinea, except the hog and the dog. The New Guinea hog is of the Chinese variety, and was probably brought from some of the neighbouring islands, being the animal most in request among savages. It has run wild in New Guinea. Thence it has been conveyed to the New Hebrides, the Tonga and Society Isles, and to the Marquesas; but it is still wanting in the more easterly islands, and, in the southward, in New Caledonia.

“Dogs may be traced from New Guinea to the New Hebrides and Fiji Isles; but they are wanting in the Tonga Isles, though found among the Society and Sandwich islanders, by some of whom they are used for food; to the southward they have been conveyed to New Caledonia and New Zealand. In Easter Island, the most remotely situated in this ocean, there are no domestic animals except fowls and rats, which are eaten by the natives: these animals are found in most of the islands; the fowls are

* Prichard, *Ibid.*; Cuvier, *Ann. du Muséum*, tom. vii.

† Prichard, *Ibid.*, p. 56.

probably from New Guinea. Rats are to be found even on some desert islands, whither they may have been conveyed by canoes which have occasionally approached the shore. It is known, also, that rats occasionally swim in large numbers to considerable distances."*

Geographical range of the cetacea.—It is natural to suppose that the geographical range of the different species of cetacea should be less correctly ascertained than that of the terrestrial mammals. It is, however, well known that the whales which are obtained by our fishers in the South Seas are distinct from those of the North; and the same dissimilarity has been found in all the other marine animals of the same class, so far as they have yet been studied by naturalists.

Dispersion of quadrupeds.—Let us now inquire what facilities the various land quadrupeds enjoy of spreading themselves over the surface of the earth. In the first place, as their numbers multiply, all of them, whether they feed on plants, or prey on other animals, are disposed to scatter themselves gradually over as wide an area as is accessible to them. But before they have extended their migrations over a large space, they are usually arrested either by the sea, or a zone of uncongenial climate, or some lofty and unbroken chain of mountains, or a tract already occupied by a hostile and more powerful species.

Their powers of swimming.—Rivers and narrow friths can seldom interfere with their progress; for the greater part of them swim well, and few are without this power when urged by danger and pressing want. Thus, amongst beasts of prey, the tiger is seen swimming about among the islands and creeks in the delta of the Ganges, and the jaguar traverses with ease the largest streams in South America.† The bear, also, and the bison, cross the current of the Mississippi. The popular error, that the common swine cannot escape by swimming when thrown into the water, has been contradicted by several curious and well-authenticated instances during the recent floods in Scotland. One pig, only six months old, after having been carried down from Garmouth to the bar at the mouth of the Spey, a distance of a quarter of a mile, swam four miles eastward to Port Gordon, and landed safe. Three others, of the same age and litter, swam, at the same time, five miles to the west, and landed at Blackhill.‡

In an adult and wild state, these animals would doubtless have been more strong and active, and might, when hard pressed, have performed a much longer voyage. Hence islands remote from the continent may obtain inhabitants by casualties which, like the late storms in Morayshire, may only occur once in many centuries, or thousands of years,

* Prichard, *Phys. Hist. of Mankind*, vol. i. p. 75.

† Buffon, vol. v. p. 204.

‡ Sir T. D. Lauder, Bart., on the Floods in Morayshire, Aug. 1829, p. 302, second edition.

under all the same circumstances. It is obvious that powerful tides, winds, and currents, may sometimes carry along quadrupeds capable, in like manner, of preserving themselves for hours in the sea, to very considerable distances; and in this way, perhaps, the tapir (*Tapir Indicus*) may have become common to Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula.

To the elephant, in particular, the power of crossing rivers is essential in a wild state, for the quantity of food which a herd of these animals consumes renders it necessary that they should be constantly moving from place to place. The elephant crosses the stream in two ways. If the bed of the river be hard, and the water not of too great a depth, he fords it. But when he crosses great rivers, such as the Ganges and the Niger, the elephant swims deep, so deep, that the end of his trunk only is out of the water; for it is a matter of indifference to him whether his body be completely immersed, provided he can bring the tip of his trunk to the surface, so as to breathe the external air.

Animals of the deer kind frequently take to the water, especially in the rutting season, when the stags are seen swimming for several leagues at a time, from island to island, in search of the does, especially in the Canadian lakes; and in some countries where there are islands near the sea shore, they fearlessly enter the sea and swim to them. In hunting excursions, in North America, the elk of that country is frequently pursued for great distances through the water.

The large herbivorous animals, which are gregarious, can never remain long in a confined region, as they consume so much vegetable food. The immense herds of bisons which often, in the great valley of the Mississippi, blacken the surface, near the banks of that river and its tributaries, are continually shifting their quarters, followed by wolves, which prowl about in their rear. "It is no exaggeration," says Mr. James, "to assert, that in one place on the banks of the Platte, at least ten thousand bisons burst on our sight in an instant. In the morning, we again sought the living picture; but upon all the plain, which last evening was so teeming with noble animals, not one remained."*

Migratory instincts.—Besides the disposition common to the individuals of every species slowly to extend their range in search of food, in proportion as their numbers augment, a migratory instinct often develops itself in an extraordinary manner, when, after an unusually prolific season, or upon a sudden scarcity of provisions, great multitudes are threatened by famine. It may be useful to enumerate some examples of these migrations, because they may put us upon our guard against attributing a high antiquity to a particular species merely because it is diffused over a great space: they show clearly how soon, in a state of nature, a newly created species might spread itself, in every direction, from a single point.

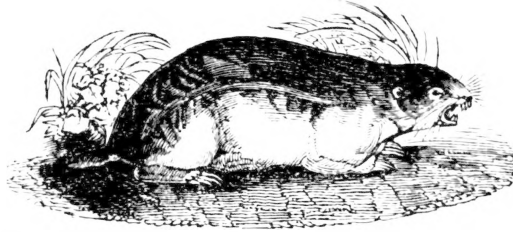
* Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains, vol. ii. p. 153.

In very severe winters, great numbers of the black bears of America migrate from Canada into the United States; but in milder seasons, when they have been well fed, they remain and hybernate in the north.* The rein-deer which, in Scandinavia, can scarcely exist to the south of the sixty-fifth parallel, descends, in consequence of the greater coldness of the climate, to the fiftieth degree, in Chinese Tartary, and often roves into a country of more southern latitude than any part of England.

In Lapland, and other high latitudes, the common squirrels, whenever they are compelled, by want of provisions, to quit their usual abodes, migrate in amazing numbers, and travel directly forwards, allowing neither rocks and forests, nor the broadest waters, to turn them from their course. Great numbers are often drowned in attempting to pass friths and rivers. In like manner the small Norway rat sometimes pursues its migrations in a straight line across rivers and lakes; and Pennant informs us, that when the rats, in Kamtschatka, become too numerous, they gather together in the spring, and proceed in great bodies westward, swimming over rivers, lakes, and arms of the sea. Many are drowned or destroyed by water-fowl or fish. As soon as they have crossed the river Penginsk, at the head of the gulf of the same name, they turn southward, and reach the rivers Judoma and Okotsk by the middle of July; a district more than 800 miles distant from their point of departure.

The leminggs, also, a small kind of rat, are described as natives of the mountains of Kolen, in Lapland; and once or twice in a quarter of a

Fig. 63.



The Leming, or Lapland Marmot (Mus Lemmus, Linn).

century they appear in vast numbers, advancing along the ground, and "devouring every green thing." Innumerable bands march from the Kolen, through Nordland and Finmark, to the Western Ocean, which they immediately enter; and, after swimming about for some time, perish. Other bands take their route through Swedish Lapland, to the Bothnian Gulf, where they are drowned in the same manner. They are followed in their journeys by bears, wolves, and foxes, which prey upon them incessantly. They generally move in lines, which are about three feet from each other, and exactly parallel, going directly forward through rivers and lakes; and when they meet with stacks of hay or corn, gnaw-

* Richardson's *Fauna Boreali-Americana*, p. 16.

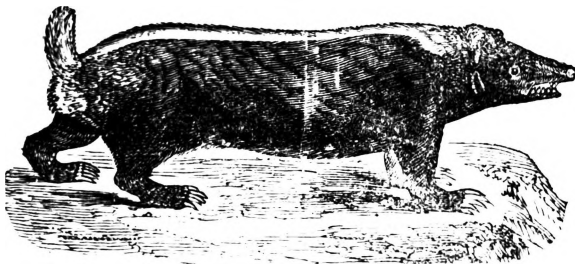
ing their way through them instead of passing round.* These excursions usually precede a rigorous winter, of which the lemmings seem in some way forewarned.

Vast troops of the wild ass, or *onager* of the ancients, which inhabit the mountainous deserts of Great Tartary, feed, during the summer, in the tracts east and north of Lake Aral. In the autumn they collect in herds of hundreds, and even thousands, and direct their course towards the north of India, and often to Persia, to enjoy a warm retreat during winter.† Bands of two or three hundred quaggas, a species of wild ass, are sometimes seen to migrate from the tropical plains of southern Africa to the vicinity of the Malaleveen river. During their migrations they are followed by lions, who slaughter them night by night.‡

The migratory swarms of the springbok, or Cape antelope, afford another illustration of the rapidity with which a species, under certain circumstances, may be diffused over a continent. When the stagnant pools of the immense deserts south of the Orange River dry up, which often happens after intervals of three or four years, myriads of these animals desert the parched soil, and pour down like a deluge on the cultivated regions near the Cape. The havoc committed by them resembles that of the African locusts; and so crowded are the herds, that “the lion has been seen to walk in the midst of the compressed phalanx with only as much room between him and his victims as the fears of those immediately around could procure by pressing outwards.”§

Dr. Horsfield mentions a singular fact in regard to the geographical distribution of the *Mydaus meliceps*, an animal intermediate between the polecat and badger. It inhabits Java, and is “confined exclusively to

Fig. 64.



Mydaus meliceps, or badger-headed *Mydaus*. Length, including the tail, 16 inches.

those mountains which have an elevation of more than seven thousand feet above the level of the ocean; on these it occurs with the same regularity as many plants. The long-extended surface of Java, abounding

* Phil. Trans., vol. ii. p. 872.

† Wood's Zoography, vol. i. p. 11.

‡ On the authority of Mr. Campbell. Library of Entert. Know., Menageries, vol. i. p. 152.

§ Cuvier's Animal Kingdom by Griffiths, vol. ii. p. 109. Library of Entert. Know., Menageries, vol. i. p. 366.

with conical points which exceed this elevation, affords many places favourable for its resort. On ascending these mountains, the traveller scarcely fails to meet with this animal, which, from its peculiarities, is universally known to the inhabitants of these elevated tracts, while to those of the plains it is as strange as an animal from a foreign country. In my visits to the mountainous districts, I uniformly met with it; and, as far as the information of the natives can be relied on, it is found on all the mountains.”*

Now, if asked to conjecture how the *Mydaus* arrived at the elevated regions of each of these isolated mountains, we might say that, before the island was peopled by man, by whom their numbers are now thinned, they may occasionally have multiplied so as to be forced to collect together and migrate: in which case, notwithstanding the slowness of their motions, some few would succeed in reaching another mountain, some twenty, or even, perhaps, fifty miles distant; for although the climate of the hot intervening plains would be unfavourable to them, they might support it for a time, and would find there abundance of insects on which they feed. Volcanic eruptions, which, at different times, have covered the summits of some of those lofty cones with sterile sand and ashes, may have occasionally contributed to force on these migrations.

Drifting of animals on ice-floes.—The power of the terrestrial mammalia to cross the sea is very limited, and it was before stated that the same species is scarcely ever common to districts widely separated by the ocean. If there be some exceptions to this rule, they generally admit of explanation; for there are natural means whereby some animals may be floated across the water, and the sea sometimes wears a passage through a neck of land, leaving individuals of a species on each side of the new channel. Polar bears are known to have been frequently drifted on the ice from Greenland to Iceland: they can also swim to considerable distances, for Captain Parry, on the return of his ships through Barrow's Strait, met with a bear swimming in the water about midway between the shores, which were about forty miles apart, and where no ice was in sight.† “Near the east coast of Greenland,” observes Scoresby, “they have been seen on the ice in such quantities, that they were compared to flocks of sheep on a common; and they are often found on field-ice, above two hundred miles from the shore.”‡ Wolves, in the arctic regions, often venture upon the ice near the shore, for the purpose of preying upon young seals, which they surprise when asleep. When these ice-floes get detached, the wolves are often carried out to sea; and though some may be drifted to islands or continents, the greater part of them perish,

* Horsfield, *Zoological Researches in Java*, No. ii., from which the figure is taken.

† Append. to Parry's *Second Voyage*, years 1819–20.

‡ *Account of the Arctic Regions*, vol. i. p. 518.

and have been often heard in this situation howling dreadfully, as they die by famine.*

During the short summer which visits Melville Island, various plants push forth their leaves and flowers the moment the snow is off the ground, and form a carpet spangled with the most lively colours. These secluded spots are reached annually by herds of musk-oxen and rein-deer, which travel immense distances over dreary and desolate regions, to graze undisturbed on these luxuriant pastures.† The rein-deer often pass along in the same manner, by the chain of the Aleutian Islands, from Behring's Straits to Kamtschatka, subsisting on the moss found in these islands during their passage.‡

On floating islands of drift wood.—Within the tropics there are no ice-floes; but, as if to compensate for that mode of transportation, there are floating islets of matted trees, which are often borne along through considerable spaces. These are sometimes seen sailing at the distance of fifty or one hundred miles from the mouth of the Ganges, with living trees standing erect upon them. The Amazon, the Congo, and the Orinoco, also produce these verdant rafts, which are formed in the manner already described when speaking of the great raft of the Atchafalaya, an arm of the Mississippi, where a natural bridge of timber, ten miles long, and more than two hundred yards wide, has existed for more than forty years, supporting a luxuriant vegetation, and rising and sinking with the water which flows beneath it.§ That this enormous mass will one day break up and send down a multitude of floating islands to the Gulf of Mexico, is the hope and well-founded expectation of the inhabitants of Louisiana.

On these green islets of the Mississippi, observes Malte-Brun, young trees take root, and the pistia and nenuphar display their yellow flowers: there serpents, birds, and the cayman alligator, come to repose, and all are sometimes carried to the sea, and engulfed in its waters.||

Spix and Martius relate that, during their travels in Brazil, they were exposed to great danger while ascending the Amazon in a canoe, from the vast quantity of drift-wood constantly propelled against them by the current; so much so, that their safety depended on the crew being always on the alert to turn aside the trunks of trees with long poles. The tops alone of some trees appeared above water, others had their roots attached to them with so much soil that they might be compared to floating islets. On these, say the travellers, we saw some very singular assemblages of animals, pursuing peaceably their uncertain way in strange companion-

* Turton, in a note to Goldsmith's Nat. Hist, vol. iii. p. 43.

† Supplement to Parry's First Voyage of Discovery, p. 189.

‡ Godman's American Nat. Hist., vol. i. p. 22.

§ See Vol. I. p. 182.

|| System of Geography, vol. v. p. 157.

ship. On one raft were several grave-looking storks, perched by the side of a party of monkeys, who made comical gestures, and burst into loud cries, on seeing the canoe. On another was seen a number of ducks and divers, sitting by a group of squirrels. Next came down, upon the stem of a large rotten cedar-tree, an enormous crocodile, by the side of a tiger-cat, both animals regarding each other with hostility and mistrust, but the saurian being evidently most at his ease, as conscious of his superior strength.*

In a memoir lately published, a naval officer informs us, that, as he returned from China by the eastern passage, he fell in, among the Moluccas, with several small floating islands of this kind, covered with mangrove-trees interwoven with underwood. The trees and shrubs retained their verdure, receiving nourishment from a stratum of soil which formed a white beach round the margin of each raft, where it was exposed to the washing of the waves and the rays of the sun.† The occurrence of soil in such situations may easily be explained; for all the natural bridges of timber which occasionally connect the islands of the Ganges, Mississippi, and other rivers, with their banks, are exposed to floods of water, densely charged with sediment.

Captain W. H. Smyth informs me, that, when cruising in the Cornwallis amidst the Philippine Islands, he has more than once seen, after those dreadful hurricanes called typhoons, floating masses of wood, with trees growing upon them; and ships have sometimes been in imminent peril, as often as these islands were mistaken for terra firma, when, in fact, they were in rapid motion.

It is highly interesting to trace, in imagination, the effects of the passage of these rafts from the mouth of a large river to some archipelago, such as those in the South Pacific, raised from the deep, in comparatively modern times, by the operations of the volcano and the earthquake, and the joint labours of coral animals and testacea. If a storm arises, and the frail vessel be wrecked, still many a bird and insect may succeed in gaining, by flight, some island of the newly formed group, while the seeds and berries of herbs and shrubs, which fall into the waves, may be thrown upon the strand. But if the surface of the deep be calm, and the rafts are carried along by a current, or wafted by some slight breath of air fanning the foliage of the green trees, it may arrive, after a passage of several weeks, at the bay of an island, into which its plants and animals may be poured out as from an ark, and thus a colony of several hundred new species may at once be naturalized.

The reader should be reminded, that I merely advert to the transportation of these rafts as of extremely rare and accidental occurrence; but it

* Spix and Martius, *Reise*, &c., vol. iii. pp. 1011. 1013.

† United Service Journal, No. xxiv. p. 697.

may account, in tropical countries, for some of the rare exceptions to the general law of the confined range of species.

Migrations of the cetacea.—Many of the cetacea, the whales of the northern seas for example, are found to desert one tract of the sea, and to visit another very distant, when they are urged by want of food, or danger. The seals also retire from the coasts of Greenland in July, return again in September, and depart again in March, to return in June. They proceed in great droves northwards, directing their course where the sea is most free from ice, and are observed to be extremely fat when they set out on this expedition, and very lean when they come home again.*

Species of the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Caspian, identical.—Some naturalists have wondered that the sea-calves, dolphins, and other marine mammalia of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, should be identical with those found in the Caspian: and among other fanciful theories, they have suggested that they may dive through subterranean conduits, and thus pass from one sea into the other. But as the occurrence of wolves and other noxious animals, on both sides of the British channel, was adduced, by Desmarest, as one of many arguments to prove that England and France were once united; so the correspondence of the aquatic species of the inland seas of Asia with those of the Black Sea tends to confirm the hypothesis, for which there are abundance of independent geological data, that those seas were connected together by straits at no remote period of the earth's history.

Geographical Distribution and Migrations of Birds.

I shall now offer a few observations on some of the other divisions of the animal kingdom. Birds, notwithstanding their great locomotive powers, form no exception to the general rules already laid down; but, in this class, as in plants and terrestrial quadrupeds, different groups of species are circumscribed within definite limits. We find, for example, one assemblage in the Brazils, another in the same latitudes in Central Africa, another in India, and a fourth in New Holland. But some species, again, are so local, that in the same archipelago, a single island frequently contains a species found in no other spot on the whole earth; as is exemplified in some of the parrot tribes. In this extensive family, which are, with few exceptions, inhabitants of tropical regions, the American group has not one in common with the African, nor either of these with the parrots of India.†

Another illustration is afforded by that minute and beautiful tribe, the humming-birds. The whole of them are, in the first place, peculiar to

* Krantz, vol. i. p. 129, cited by Goldsmith, Nat. Hist., vol. iii. p. 260.

† Prichard, vol. i. p. 47.

the new world; but there, although some have a considerable range, as the *Trochilus flammifrons*, which is common to Lima, the Island of Juan Fernandez, and the Straits of Magellan;* other species are peculiar to some of the West India islands, and have not been found elsewhere in the western hemisphere. The ornithology of our own country affords a no less striking exemplification of the same law; for the common grouse (*Tetrao scoticus*) occurs nowhere in the known world except in the British isles.

Some species of the vulture tribe are said to be true cosmopolites; and the common wild goose (*Anas anser*, Linn.), if we may believe some ornithologists, is a general inhabitant of the globe, being met with from Lapland to the Cape of Good Hope, frequent in Arabia, Persia, China, and Japan, and in the American continent, from Hudson's Bay to South Carolina.† An extraordinary range has also been attributed to the nightingale, which extends from western Europe to Persia, and still farther. In a work entitled *Specchio Comparativo*,‡ by Charles Bonaparte, many species of birds are enumerated as common to Rome and Philadelphia; the greater part of these are migratory, but some of them, such as the long-eared owl (*Strix otus*), are permanent in both countries.

Their facilities of diffusion.—In parallel zones of the northern and southern hemispheres, a great general correspondence of form is observable, both in the aquatic and terrestrial birds; but there is rarely any specific identity: and this phenomenon is truly remarkable, when we recollect the readiness with which some birds, not gifted with great powers of flight, shift their quarters to different regions, and the facility with which others, possessing great strength of wing, perform their aerial voyage. Some migrate periodically from high latitudes, to avoid the cold of winter, and the accompaniments of cold,—scarcity of insects and vegetable food; others, it is said, for some particular kinds of nutriment required for rearing their young: for this purpose, they often traverse the ocean for thousands of miles, and recross it at other periods, with equal security.

Periodical migrations, no less regular, are mentioned by Humboldt, of many American water-fowl, from one part of the tropics to another, in a zone where there is the same temperature throughout the year. Immense flights of ducks leave the valley of the Orinoco, when the increasing depth of its waters and the flooding of its shores prevent them from catching fish, insects, and aquatic worms. They then betake themselves to the Rio Negro and Amazon, having passed from the eighth and third

* Captain King, during his late survey, found this bird at the Straits of Magellan, in the month of May—the depth of winter—sucking the flowers of the large species of fuchsia, then in bloom, in the midst of a shower of snow.

† Bewick's Birds, vol. ii. p. 294, who cites Latham.

‡ Pisa, 1827 (not sold).

degrees of north latitude to the first and fourth of south latitude, directing their course south-south-east. In September, when the Orinoco decreases and re-enters into its channel, these birds return northwards.*

The insectivorous swallows which visit our island would perish during winter, if they did not annually repair to warmer climes. It is supposed that, in these aerial excursions the average rapidity of their flight is no less than fifty miles an hour; so that, when aided by the wind, they soon reach warmer latitudes. Spallanzani calculated that the swallow can fly at the rate of ninety-two miles an hour, and conceived that the rapidity of the swift might be three times greater.† The rate of flight of the eider duck (*Anas mollissima*) has been ascertained to be ninety miles an hour; and that of hawks, and several other tribes, to be 150 miles.

When we reflect how easily different species, in a great lapse of ages, may be each overtaken by gales and hurricanes, and, abandoning themselves to the tempest, be scattered at random through various regions of the earth's surface, where the temperature of the atmosphere, the vegetation, and the animal productions, might be suited to their wants, we shall be prepared to find some species capriciously distributed, and to be sometimes unable to determine the native countries of each. Captain Smyth informs me, that, when engaged in his survey of the Mediterranean, he encountered a gale in the Gulf of Lyons, at the distance of between twenty and thirty leagues from the coast of France, which bore along many land birds of various species, some of which alighted on the ship, while others were thrown with violence against the sails. In this manner islands become tenanted by species of birds inhabiting the nearest mainland.

Geographical Distribution and Dissemination of Reptiles.

A few facts respecting the third great class of vertebrated animals will suffice to show that the plan of nature in regard to their location on the globe is perfectly analogous to that already exemplified in other parts of the organic creation, and has probably been determined by similar causes.

Habitations of reptiles.—Of the great saurians, the gavials which inhabit the Ganges differ from the cayman of America, or the crocodile of the Nile. The monitor of New Holland is specifically distinct from the Indian species; these latter, again, from the African, and all from their congeners in the new world. So in regard to snakes; we find the boa of America represented by the python, a different though nearly allied genus in India. America is the country of the rattlesnake; Africa, of the cerastes; and Asia, of the hooded snake, or cobra di capello.

* Voyage aux Régions Equinoxiales, tome vii. p. 429.

† Fleming, Phil. Zool., vol. ii. p. 43.

There is a legend that St. Patrick expelled all reptiles from Ireland ; and certain it is that none of the three species of snakes common in England, nor the toad, have been observed there by naturalists. They have our common frog, and our water-newt, and according to Ray (Quad. 264.), the green lizard (*Lacerta viridis*). Schultes the botanist observed, a few years since, in his tour in England, that there were two great islands in Europe of which the floras were unknown—Sardinia and Ireland ; he might, perhaps, have added, the fauna of the latter country.

Migrations of the larger reptiles.—The range of the large reptiles is, in general, quite as limited as that of some orders of the terrestrial mammalia. The great saurians sometimes cross a considerable tract in order to pass from one river to another ; but their motions by land are generally slower than those of quadrupeds. By water, however, they may transport themselves to distant situations more easily. The larger alligator of the Ganges sometimes descends beyond the brackish water of the Delta into the sea ; and in such cases it might chance to be drifted away by a current, and survive till it reached a shore at some distance ; but such casualties are probably very rare.*

Turtles migrate in large droves from one part of the ocean to another during the ovipositing season. Dr. Fleming mentions, that an individual of the hawk's bill turtle (*Chelonia imbricata*), so common in the American seas, has been taken at Papa Stour, one of the West Zetland islands ;† and, according to Sibbald, “the same animal came into Orkney.” Another was taken, in 1774, in the Severn, according to Turton. Two instances, also, of the occurrence of the leathern tortoise (*C. coriacea*), on the coast of Cornwall, in 1756, are mentioned by Borlase. These animals of more southern seas can be considered only as stragglers attracted to our shores during uncommonly warm seasons by an abundant supply of food, or carried by the Gulf stream, or driven by storms to high latitudes.

Some of the smaller reptiles lays their eggs on aquatic plants ; and these must often be borne rapidly by rivers, and conveyed to distant regions in a manner similar to the dispersion of seeds before adverted to. But that the larger ophidians may be themselves transported across the seas, is evident from the following most interesting account of the arrival of one at the island of St. Vincent. It is worthy of being recorded, says Mr. Guilding, “that a noble specimen of the *Boa constrictor* was lately conveyed to us by the currents, twisted round the trunk of a large sound cedar tree, which had probably been washed out of the bank by the floods of some great South American river, while its huge folds hung on the branches,

* Malte-Brun says (Syst. of Geog., vol. viii. p. 193), that a crocodile is still preserved at Lyons that was taken from the *Rhone*, about two centuries ago ; but no particulars are given.

† Brit. Animals, p. 149 ; who cites Sibbald.

as it waited for its prey. The monster was fortunately destroyed after killing a few sheep, and his skeleton now hangs before me in my study, putting me in mind how much reason I might have had to fear in my future rambles through the forests of St. Vincent, had this formidable reptile been a pregnant female, and escaped to a safe retreat.”*

CHAPTER VII.

LAWS WHICH REGULATE THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIES—*continued.*

Geographical distribution and migrations of fish—of testacea—of zoophytes (p. 45.)—Distribution of insects—Migratory instincts of some species—Certain types characterize particular countries—Their means of dissemination—Geographical distribution and diffusion of man (p. 49.)—Speculations as to the birth-place of the human species—Progress of human population—Drifting of canoes to vast distances—On the involuntary influence of man in extending the range of many other species (p. 52.).

Geographical Distribution and Migrations of Fish.

ALTHOUGH we are less acquainted with the arbitrations of marine animals than with the grouping of the terrestrial species before described, yet it is well ascertained that their distribution is governed by the same general laws. The testimony borne by MM. Péron and Lesueur to this important fact is remarkably strong. These eminent naturalists, after collecting and describing many thousand species of marine animals which they brought to Europe from the southern hemisphere, insist most emphatically on their distinctness from those north of the equator; and this remark they extend to animals of all classes, from those of a more simple to those of a more complex organization—from the sponges and medusæ to the cetacea. “Among all those which we have been able to examine,” say they, “with our own eyes, or with regard to which it has appeared to us possible to pronounce with certainty, there is not a single animal of the southern regions which is not distinguished by essential characters from the analogous species in the northern seas.”†

* Zool. Journ., vol. iii. p. 406. Dec. 1827.

† Sur les Habitations des Animaux Marins.—Ann. du Mus., tom. xv., cited by Prichard, *Phys. Hist. of Mankind*, vol. i. p. 51.

The fish of the Arabian Gulf are said to differ entirely from those of the Mediterranean, notwithstanding the proximity of these seas. The flying-fish are found (some stragglers excepted) only between the tropics; in receding from the line, they never approach a higher latitude than the fortieth parallel. Those inhabiting the Atlantic are said to be different species from those of the eastern ocean.* The electric gymnotus belongs exclusively to America; the trembler, or *Silurus electricus*, to the rivers of Africa; but the torpedo, or cramp-fish, is said to be dispersed over all tropical, and many temperate seas.†

All are aware that there are certain fish of passage which have their periodical migrations, like some tribes of birds. The salmon, towards the season of spawning, ascends the rivers for hundreds of miles, leaping up the cataracts which it meets in its course, and then retreats again into the depths of the ocean. The herring and the haddock, after frequenting certain shores, in vast shoals, for a series of years, desert them again, and resort to other stations, followed by the species which prey on them. Eels are said to descend into the sea for the purpose of producing their young, which are seen returning into the fresh water by myriads, extremely small in size, but possessing the power of surmounting every obstacle which occurs in the course of a river, by applying their slimy and glutinous bodies to the surface of the rocks, or the gates of a lock, even when dry, and so climbing over it.‡ Before the year 1800 there were no eels in Lake Wener, the largest inland lake in Sweden, which discharges its waters by the celebrated cataracts of Trollhättan. But I am informed by Professor Nilsson that since the canal was opened uniting the river Gotha with the lake by a series of nine locks, each of great height, eels have been observed in abundance in the lake. It appears, therefore, that though they were unable to ascend the falls, they have made their way by the locks, by which in a very short space a difference of level of 114 feet is overcome.

Gmelin says, that the anseres (wild geese, ducks, and others) subsist, in their migrations, on the spawn of fish; and that oftentimes, when they void the spawn, two or three days afterwards, the eggs retain their vitality unimpaired.§ When there are many disconnected fresh-water lakes in a mountainous region, at various elevations, each remote from the other, it has often been deemed inconceivable how they could all become stocked with fish from one common source; but it has been suggested, that the minute eggs of these animals may sometimes be entangled in the feathers of water-fowl. These, when they alight to wash and plume themselves in the water, may often unconsciously contribute to propagate swarms of fish, which, in due season, will supply them with food. Some of the

* Malte-Brun, vol. i. p. 507.

‡ Phil. Trans. 1747, p. 335.

† Ibid.

§ Amœn. Acad., Essay 75.

water-beetles, also, as the dyticipidæ, are amphibious, and in the evening quit their lakes and pools; and, flying in the air, transport the minute ova of fishes to distant waters. In this manner some naturalists account for the fry of fish appearing occasionally in small pools caused by heavy rains.

Geographical Distribution and Migrations of Testacea.

The testacea, of which so great a variety of species occurs in the sea, are a class of animals of peculiar importance to the geologist; because their remains are found in strata of all ages, and generally in a higher state of preservation than those of other organic beings. Climate has a decided influence on the geographical distribution of species in this class; but as there is much greater uniformity of temperature in the waters of the ocean, than in the atmosphere which invests the land, the diffusion of many marine mollusks is extensive.

Causes which limit the extension of many species.—Some forms, as those of the nautili, volutæ, and cyprææ, attain their fullest development in warm latitudes; and most of their species are exclusively confined to them. Péron and Lesueur remark, that the *Halliotis gigantea* of Van Diemen's Land, and the *Phasianella*, diminish in size as they follow the coasts of New Holland to King George's Sound, and entirely disappear beyond them.* Almost all the species of South American shells differ from those of the Indian Archipelago in the same latitudes; and on the shores of many of the islands of the South Pacific, peculiar species have been obtained. But we are as yet by no means able to sketch out the submarine provinces of shells, as the botanist has done those of the terrestrial, and even of the subaqueous plants. There can be little doubt, however, that the boundaries in this case, both of latitude and longitude, will be found in general well defined. The continuous lines of continents, stretching from north to south, prevent a particular species from belting the globe, and following the direction of the isothermal lines. The inhabitants of the West Indian seas, for example, cannot enter the Pacific, without passing round through the inclement climate of Cape Horn. Currents also flowing permanently in certain directions, and the influx at certain points of great bodies of fresh water, limit the extension of many species. Those which love deep water are arrested by shoals; others, fitted for shallow seas, cannot migrate across unfathomable abysses.

Great range of some species.—Some few species, however, have an immense range, as the *Sanguinolaria rugosa*, Lamk., which is found in the West Indies, Brazil, the Red Sea, Trancobar, the Chinese sea, and

* Ann. du Mus. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xv.

in the island of Annaa, one of the South Sea islands, where it was discovered by Mr. Cuming.* The *Cypræa moneta*, a Mediterranean shell, occurs also in South Africa, the Isle of France, the East Indies, in China, the South Sea, and even as far west as Otaheite. The *Turbo petræus* inhabits the seas of England, Guadaloupe, and the Cape of Good Hope.†

The *Ianthina fragilis* has wandered into almost every sea, both tropical and temperate. This "common oceanic snail" derives its buoyancy from an admirably contrived float, which has enabled it not only to disperse itself so universally, but to become an active agent in disseminating other species, which attach themselves, or their ova, to its shell.‡

It is evident that, among the testacea, as in plants and the higher order of animals, there are species which have a power of enduring a wide range of temperature, whereas others cannot resist a considerable change of climate. Among the freshwater mollusks, and those which breathe air, Férussac mentions a few instances of species of almost universal diffusion.

The *Helix putris* (*Succinea putris*, Lam.), so common in Europe, where it reaches from Norway to Italy, is also found in Egypt, in the United States, in Newfoundland, Jamaica, Tranquebar, and, it is even said, in the Marianne Isles. As this animal inhabits constantly the borders of pools and streams where there is much moisture, it is not impossible that different water-fowl have been the agents of spreading some of its minute eggs, which may have been entangled in their feathers. *Helix aspersa*, one of the commonest of our larger land-shells, is found in South America, at the foot of Chimborazo, as also in Cayenne, and in St. Helena. Some conchologists have conjectured that it was accidentally imported in some ship; for it is an eatable species, and these animals are capable of retaining life during long voyages, without air or nourishment.§

Confined range of others.—Mr. Lowe, in a memoir published in the

* On the authority of Dr. Beck.

† Fér. Art. Géogr. Phys. Dict. Class. d'Hist. Nat.

‡ Mr. Broderip possesses specimens of *Ianthina fragilis*, bearing more than one species of barnacle (*Pentelasmis*), presented to him by Captain King and Lieutenant Graves. One of these specimens, taken alive by Captain King far at sea, and a little north of the equator, is so loaded with those cirrhipeds, and with numerous ova, that all the upper part of its shell is invisible.

§ Four individuals of a large species of land-shell (*Bulimus*), from Valparaiso, were brought to England by Lieutenant Graves, who accompanied Captain King in his late expedition to the Straits of Magellan. They had been packed up in a box, and enveloped in cotton; two for a space of thirteen, one for seventeen, and a fourth for upwards of twenty months; but, on being exposed by Mr. Broderip to the warmth of a fire in London, and provided with tepid water and leaves, they revived, and lived for several months in Mr. Loddiges' palm-house, till accidentally drowned.

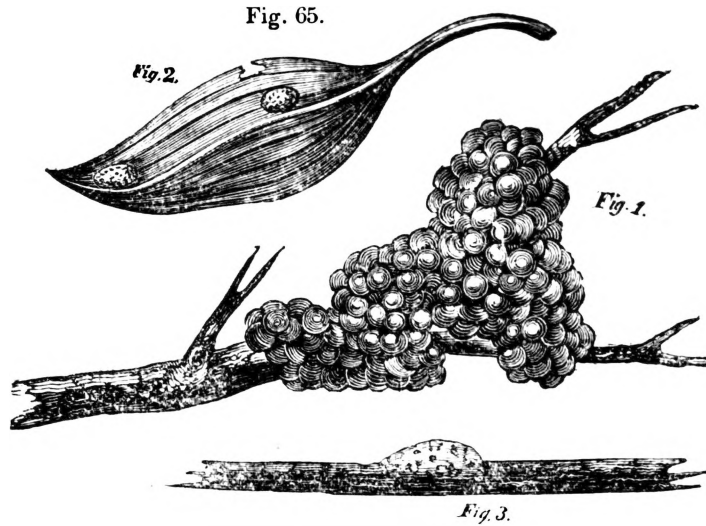
Cambridge Transactions in 1831, enumerates seventy-one species of land mollusca, collected by him in the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo, sixty of which belonged to the genus *Helix* alone, including as sub-genera *Bulimus* and *Achatina*, and excluding *Vitrina* and *Clausilia*;—forty-four of these are new. It is remarkable, that very few of the above-mentioned species are common to the neighbouring archipelago of the Canaries; but it is a still more striking fact, that, of the sixty species of the three genera above-mentioned, thirty-one are natives of Porto Santo; whereas, in Madeira, which contains ten times the superficies, were found but twenty-nine. Of these only four were common to the two islands, which are separated by a distance of only twelve leagues; and two even of these four (namely, *Helix rhodostoma* and *H. ventrosa*) are species of general diffusion, common to Madeira, the Canaries, and the South of Europe.*

The confined range of these mollusks may easily be explained, if we admit that species have only one birth-place; and the only problem to be solved would relate to the exceptions—to account for the dissemination of some species throughout several islands, and the European continent. May not the eggs, when washed into the sea by the undermining of cliffs, or blown by a storm from the land, float uninjured to a distant shore?

Their mode of diffusion.—Notwithstanding the proverbially slow motion of snails and mollusks in general, and although many aquatic species adhere constantly to the same rock for their whole lives, they are by no means destitute of provision for disseminating themselves rapidly over a wide area. Some lay their eggs in a sponge-like nidus, wherein the young remain enveloped for a time after their birth; and this buoyant substance floats far and wide as readily as sea-weed. The young of other viviparous tribes are often borne along, entangled in sea-weed. Sometimes they are so light, that, like grains of sand, they can be easily moved by currents. Balani and serpulæ are sometimes found adhering to floating cocoa-nuts, and even to fragments of pumice. In rivers and lakes, on the other hand, aquatic univalves usually attach their eggs to leaves and sticks which have fallen into the water, and which are liable to be swept away during floods, from tributaries to the main streams, and from thence to all parts of the same basins. Particular species may thus migrate during one season from the head waters of the Mississippi, or any other great river, to countries bordering the sea, at the distance of many thousand miles.

An illustration of the mode of attachment of these eggs will be seen in the cut on page 44 (Fig. 65.).

* Camb. Phil. Trans., vol. iv. 1831.



Eggs of fresh-water Mollusks.

Fig. 1. Eggs of *Ampullaria ovata* (a fluviatile species), fixed to a small sprig which had fallen into the water.

Fig. 2. Eggs of *Planorbis albus*, attached to a dead leaf lying under water.

Fig. 3. Eggs of the common *Limneus* (*L. vulgaris*), adhering to a dead stick under water.

The habit of some testacea to adhere to floating wood is proved by their fixing themselves to the bottoms of ships. By this mode of conveyance *Mytilus polymorphus*, previously known only in the Danube and Wolga, has been brought to the Commercial Docks in the Thames, and to Hamburg, where the species is now domiciled.

A lobster (*Astacus marinus*) was lately taken alive covered with living muscles (*Mytilus edulis*);* and a large female crab (*Cancer pagurus*), covered with oysters, and bearing also *Anomia ephippium*, and actiniæ, was taken in April, 1832, off the English coast. The oysters, seven in number, include individuals of six years' growth, and the two largest are four inches long and three inches and a-half broad. Both the crab and the oysters were seen alive by Mr. Robert Brown.†

From this example we learn the manner in which oysters may be diffused over every part of the sea where the crab wanders; and if they are at length carried to a spot where there is nothing but fine mud, the foundation of a new oyster-bank may be laid on the death of the crab. In this

* The specimen is preserved in the Museum of the Zool. Soc. of London.

† This specimen is in the collection of my friend Mr. Broderip, who observes, that this crab, which was apparently in perfect health, could not have cast her shell for six years; whereas some naturalists have stated that the species moults annually, without limiting the moulting period to the early stages of growth of the animal.

instance the oysters survived the crab many days, and were killed at last, only by long exposure to the air.

Geographical Distribution and Migrations of Zoophytes.

Zoophytes are very imperfectly known, but there can be little doubt that each maritime region possesses species peculiar to itself. The mad-repores, or lamelliferous polyparia, are found in their fullest development only in the tropical seas of Polynesia and the East and West Indies; and this family is represented only by a few species in our seas. Those even of the Mediterranean are inferior in size, and, for the most part, different from such as inhabit the tropics. Péron and Lesueur, after studying the Holothuriæ, Medusæ, and other congeners of delicate and changeable forms, came to the conclusion that each kind has its place of residence determined by the temperature necessary to support its existence. Thus, for example, they found the abode of *Pyrosoma Atlantica* to be confined to one particular region of the Atlantic Ocean.*

Let us now inquire how the transportation of polyps from one part of the globe to another is effected. Many of them, as in the families *Flustra* and *Sertularia*, attach themselves to sea-weed, and are occasionally drifted along with it. Many fix themselves to the shells of gasteropods, and are thus borne along by them to short distances. Some polyps, like the sea-pens, float about in the ocean, and are usually believed to possess powers of spontaneous motion, although modern naturalists are not agreed upon this point. But the most frequent mode of transportation consists in the buoyancy of their eggs, or certain small vesicles, which are detached, and are capable of becoming the foundation of a new colony. These gems, as they are called, have in many instances a locomotive power of their own, by which they proceed in a determinate direction for several days after separation from the parent. They are propelled by means of numerous short threads or hairs, which are in constant and rapid vibration; and, when thus supported in the water, they may be borne along by currents to a great distance.

That some zoophytes adhere to floating bodies, is proved by their being found attached to the bottoms of ships, like certain testacea before alluded to.

Geographical Distribution and Migrations of Insects.

Before I conclude this sketch of the manner in which the habitable parts of the earth are shared out among particular assemblages of organic beings, I must offer a few remarks on insects, which, by their numbers

* Voy. Aux Terres Australes, tome i. p. 492.

and the variety of their powers and instincts, exert a prodigious influence in the economy of animate nature. As a large portion of these minute creatures are strictly dependant for their subsistence on certain species of vegetables, the entomological provinces must coincide in a considerable degree with the botanical.

All the insects, says Latreille, brought from the eastern parts of Asia and China, whatever be their latitude and temperature, are distinct from those of Europe and of Africa. The insects of the United States, although often they approach very close to our own, are nevertheless specifically distinguishable by some characters. In South America, the equinoxial lands of New Granada and Peru on the one side, and of Guiana on the other, contain for the most part distinct groups; the Andes forming the division, and interposing a narrow line of severe cold between climates otherwise very similar.*

Migratory instincts.—The insects of the United States, even those of the northern provinces as far as Canada, differ specifically from the European; while those of Greenland appear to be in a great measure identical with our own. Some insects are very local; while a few, on the contrary, are common to remote countries, between which the torrid zone and the ocean intervene. Thus our painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*) reappears in New Holland and Japan with scarcely a varying streak.† The same species is said to be one of the few insects which are universally dispersed over the earth, being found in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; and its wide range is the more interesting, because it seems explained by its migratory instinct, seconded, no doubt, by a capacity, enjoyed by few species, of enduring a great diversity of temperature.

A vast swarm of this species, forming a column from ten to fifteen feet broad, was, a few years since, observed in the Canton de Vaud; they traversed the country with great rapidity from north to south, all flying onwards in regular order, close together, and not turning from their course on the approach of other objects. Professor Bonelli, of Turin, observed in March of the same year, a similar swarm of the same species, also directing their flight from north to south, in Piedmont, in such immense numbers that at night the flowers were literally covered with them. They had been traced from Coni, Racon, Susa, &c. A similar flight at the end of the last century is recorded by M. Louch, in the Memoirs of the Academy of Turin. The fact is the more worthy of notice, because the caterpillars of this butterfly are not gregarious, but solitary from the moment that they are hatched; and this instinct remains dormant, while generation after generation passes away, till it suddenly displays itself in full energy when their numbers happen to be in excess.

* Géographie Générale des Insectes et des Arachnides. Mém. du Mus. d'Hist. Nat., tome iii.

† Kirby and Spence, vol. iv. p. 437.

Not only peculiar species, but certain types, distinguish particular countries; and there are groups, observes Kirby, which represent each other in distant regions, whether in their form, their functions, or in both. Thus the honey and wax of Europe, Asia, and Africa, are in each case prepared by bees congeneric with our common hive-bee (*Apis*, Latr.); while in America, this genus is nowhere indigeneous, but is replaced by *Melipona*, *Trigona*, and *Euglossa*; and in New Holland by a still different, but undescribed type.* The European bee (*Apis mellifica*), although not a native of the new world, is now established, both in North and South America. It was introduced into the United States by some of the early settlers, and has since overspread the vast forests of the interior, building hives in the decayed trunks of trees. "The Indians," says Irving, "consider them as the harbinger of the white man as the buffalo is of the red man, and say that in proportion as the bee advances the Indian and the buffalo retire. It is said," continues the same writer, "that the wild bee is seldom to be met with at any great distance from the frontier, and that they have always been the heralds of civilization, preceding it as it advanced from the Atlantic borders. Some of the ancient settlers of the west even pretend to give the very year when the honey-bee first crossed the Mississippi.†

As almost all insects are winged, they can readily spread themselves wherever their progress is not opposed by uncongenial climates, or by seas, mountains, and other physical impediments; and these barriers they can sometimes surmount by abandoning themselves to violent winds, which, as I before stated, when speaking of floating seeds, may in a few hours carry them to very considerable distances. On the Andes some sphinxes and flies have been observed by Humboldt, at the height of 19,180 feet above the sea, and which appeared to him to have been involuntarily carried into these regions by ascending currents of air.‡

White mentions a remarkable shower of aphides which seem to have emigrated, with an east wind, from the great hop plantations of Kent and Sussex, and blackened the shrubs and vegetables where they alighted at Selborne, spreading at the same time in great clouds all along the vale from Farnham to Alton. These aphides are sometimes accompanied by vast numbers of the common lady-bird (*Coccinella septempunctata*), which feed upon them.§

It is remarkable, says Kirby, that many of the insects which are occasionally observed to emigrate, as, for instance, the libellulæ, coccinellæ, carabi, cicadæ, &c. are not usually social insects; but seem to congregate, like swallows, merely for the purpose of emigration.¶ Here, therefore, we have

* Kirby and Spence, vol. iv. p. 497.

† Washington Irving's Tour in the Prairies, ch. ix.

‡ Description of the Equatorial Regions—Malte-Brun, vol. v. p. 379.

§ Kirby and Spence, vol. ii. p. 9. 1817.

¶ Ibid. p. 12.

an example of an instinct developing itself on certain rare emergencies, causing unsocial species to become gregarious, and to venture sometimes even to cross the ocean.

The armies of locusts which darken the air in Africa and traverse the globe from Turkey to our southern counties in England, are well known to all. When the western gales sweep over the Pampas, they bear along with them myriads of insects of various kinds. As a proof of the manner in which species may be thus diffused, I may mention that when the Creole frigate was lying in the outer roads off Buenos Ayres, in 1819, at the distance of six miles from the land, her decks and rigging were suddenly covered with thousands of flies and grains of sand. The sides of the vessel had just received a fresh coat of paint, to which the insects adhered in such numbers as to spot and disfigure the vessel, and to render it necessary partially to renew the paint.* Captain W. H. Smyth was obliged to repaint his vessel, the *Adventure*, in the Mediterranean, from the same cause. He was on his way from Malta to Tripoli, when a southern wind blowing from the coast of Africa, then one hundred miles distant, drove such myriads of flies upon the fresh paint, that not the smallest point was left unoccupied by insects.

To the southward of the river Plate, off Cape St. Antonio, and at the distance of fifty miles from land, several large dragon-flies alighted on the *Adventure* frigate, during Captain King's late expedition to the Straits of Magellan. If the wind abates when insects are thus crossing the sea, the most delicate species are not necessarily drowned; for many can repose without sinking on the water. The slender long-legged tipulæ have been seen standing on the surface of the sea, when driven out far from our coast, and took wing immediately on being approached.† Exotic beetles are sometimes thrown on our shore, which revive after having been long drenched in salt water; and the periodical appearance of some conspicuous butterflies amongst us, after being unseen for five or fifty years, has been ascribed, not without probability, to the agency of the winds.

Inundations of rivers, observes Kirby, if they happen at any season except in the depth of winter, always carry down a number of insects, floating on the surface of bits of stick, weeds, &c.; so that when the waters subside, the entomologist may generally reap a plentiful harvest. In the dissemination, moreover, of these minute beings, as in that of plants, the larger animals play their part. Insects are, in numberless instances, borne along in the coats of animals, or the feathers of birds; and the eggs of some species are capable, like seeds, of resisting the digestive powers of the stomach, and after they are swallowed with herbage, may be ejected again unharmed in the dung.

* I am indebted to Lieutenant Graves, R. N., for this information.

† I state this fact on the authority of my friend, Mr. John Curtis.

Geographical Distribution and Diffusion of Man.

I have reserved for the last some observations on the range and diffusion of the human species over the earth, and the influence of man in spreading other animals and plants, especially the terrestrial.

Many naturalists have amused themselves in speculating on the probable birth-place of mankind, the point from which, if we assume the whole human race to have descended from a single pair, the tide of emigration must originally have proceeded. It has been always a favourite conjecture, that this birth-place was situated within or near the tropics, where perpetual summer reigns, and where fruits, herbs, and roots are plentifully supplied throughout the year. The climate of these regions, it has been said, is suited to a being born without any covering, and who had not yet acquired the arts of building habitations or providing clothes.

Progress of human population.—"The hunter state," it has been argued, "which Montesquieu placed the first, was probably only the second stage to which mankind arrived; since so many arts must have been invented to catch a salmon, or a deer, that society could no longer have been in its infancy when they came into use."* When regions where the spontaneous fruits of the earth abound became overpeopled, men would naturally diffuse themselves over the neighbouring parts of the temperate zone: but a considerable time would probably elapse before this event took place; and it is possible, as a writer before cited observes, that in the interval before the multiplication of their numbers and their increasing wants had compelled them to emigrate, some arts to take animals were invented, but far inferior to what we see practised at this day among savages. As their habitations gradually advanced into the temperate zone, the new difficulties they had to encounter would call forth by degrees the spirit of invention, and the probability of such inventions always rises with the number of people involved in the same necessity."†

A distinguished modern writer, who coincides for the most part in the views above mentioned, has introduced one of the persons in his second dialogue as objecting to the theory of the human race having gradually advanced from a savage to a civilized state, on the ground that "the first man must have inevitably been destroyed by the elements or devoured by savage beasts, so infinitely his superiors in physical force."‡ He then contends against the difficulty here started by various arguments, all of which were, perhaps, superfluous; for, if a philosopher is pleased to indulge in conjectures on this subject, why should he not assign, as the

* Brand's Select Dissert. from the Amœn. Acad., vol. i. p. 118.

† Ibid.

‡ Sir H. Davy, Consolations in Travel, p. 74.

original seat of man, some one of those large islands within the tropics, which are as free from large beasts of prey as Van Diemen's Land or Australia? Here man may have remained for a period, peculiar to a single island, just as some of the large anthropomorphous species are now limited to one island within the tropics. In such a situation, the new-born race might have lived in security, though far more helpless than the New Holland savages, and might have found abundance of vegetable food. Colonies may afterwards have been sent forth from this mother country, and then the peopling of the earth may have proceeded according to the hypothesis before alluded to.

In an early stage of society the necessity of hunting acts as a principle of repulsion, causing men to spread with the greatest rapidity over a country, until the whole is covered with scattered settlements. It has been calculated that eight hundred acres of hunting-ground produce only as much food as half an acre of arable land. When the game has been in a great measure exhausted, and a state of pasturage succeeds, the several hunter tribes, being already scattered, may multiply in a short time into the greatest number which the pastoral state is capable of sustaining. The necessity, says Brand, thus imposed upon the two savage states, of dispersing themselves far and wide over the country, affords a reason why, at a very early period, the worst parts of the earth may have become inhabited.

But this reason, it may be said, is only applicable in as far as regards the peopling of a continuous continent; whereas the smallest islands, however remote from continents, have almost invariably been found inhabited by man. St. Helena, it is true, afforded an exception; for when that island was discovered in 1501, it was only inhabited by sea-fowl, and occasionally by seals and turtles, and was covered with a forest of trees and shrubs, all of species peculiar to it, with one or two exceptions, and which seem to have been expressly created for this remote and insulated spot.*

Drifting of canoes to vast distances.—But very few of the numerous coral islets and volcanos of the vast Pacific, capable of sustaining a few families of men, have been found untenanted; and we have, therefore, to inquire whence and by what means, if all the members of the great human family have had one common source, could those savages have migrated? Cook, Forster, and others, have remarked that parties of savages in their canoes must often have lost their way, and must have been driven on distant shores, where they were forced to remain, deprived both of the means and of the requisite intelligence for returning to their own country. Thus Captain Cook found on the island of Wateoo three inhabitants of Otaheite, who had been drifted thither in a canoe, although

* Ante, p. 13.

the distance between the two isles is 550 miles. In 1696, two canoes, containing thirty persons, who had left Ancorso, were thrown by contrary winds and storms on the island of Samar, one of the Philippines, at a distance of 800 miles. In 1721, two canoes, one of which contained twenty-four, and the other six persons, men, women, and children, were drifted from an island called Farroilep to the island of Guaham, one of the Marians, a distance of 200 miles.*

Kotzebue, when investigating the Coral Isles of Radack, at the eastern extremity of the Caroline Isles, became acquainted with a person of the name of Kadu, who was a native of Ulea, an isle 1500 miles distant, from which he had been drifted with a party. Kadu and three of his countrymen one day left Ulea in a sailing boat, when a violent storm arose, and drove them out of their course; they drifted about the open sea for eight months, according to their reckoning by the moon, making a knot on a cord at every new moon. Being expert fishermen, they subsisted entirely on the produce of the sea; and when the rain fell, laid in as much fresh water as they had vessels to contain it. "Kadu," says Kotzebue, "who was the best diver, frequently went down to the bottom of the sea, where it is well known that the water is not so salt, with a cocoa-nut shell, with only a small opening."† When these unfortunate men reached the isles of Radack, every hope and almost every feeling had died within them; their sail had long been destroyed, their canoe had long been the sport of winds and waves, and they were picked up by the inhabitants of Aur in a state of insensibility; but, by the hospitable care of those islanders, they soon recovered, and were restored to perfect health.‡

Captain Beechey, in his late voyage to the Pacific, fell in with some natives of the Coral Islands, who had in a similar manner been carried to a great distance from their native country. They had embarked, to the number of 150 souls, in three double canoes, from Anaa, or Chain Island, situated about three hundred miles to the eastward of Otaheite. They were overtaken by the monsoon, which dispersed the canoes; and after driving them about the ocean, left them becalmed, so that a great number of persons perished. Two of the canoes were never heard of, but the other was drifted from one uninhabited island to another, at each of which the voyagers obtained a few provisions; and at length, after having wandered for a distance of 600 miles, they were found and carried to their home in the Blossom.§

* Malte-Brun's Geography, vol. iii. p. 419.

† Chamisso states that the water which they brought up was cooler, and, *in their opinion*, less salt. It is difficult to conceive its being fresher near the bottom, except where submarine springs may happen to rise.

‡ Kotzebue's Voyage, 1815—1818. Quarterly Review, vol. xxvi. p. 361.

§ Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific, &c., in the years 1825, 1826, 1827, 1828, p. 170.

The space traversed in some of these instances was so great, that similar accidents might suffice to transport canoes from various parts of Africa to the shores of South America, or from Spain to the Azores, and thence to North America; so that man, even in a rude state of society, is liable to be scattered involuntarily by the winds and waves over the globe, in a manner singularly analogous to that in which many plants and animals are diffused. We ought not, then, to wonder, that during the ages required for some tribes of the human race to attain that advanced stage of civilization which empowers the navigator to cross the ocean in all directions with security, the whole earth should have become the abode of rude tribes of hunters and fishers. Were the whole of mankind now cut off, with the exception of one family, inhabiting the old or new continent, or Australia, or even some coral islet of the Pacific, we might expect their descendants, though they should never become more enlightened than the South Sea Islanders or the Esquimaux, to spread in the course of ages over the whole earth, diffused partly by the tendency of population to increase, in a limited district, beyond the means of subsistence, and partly by the accidental drifting of canoes by tides and currents to distant shores.

Involuntary Influence of Man in diffusing Animals and Plants.

Many of the general remarks which have been made respecting the influence of man in spreading or in checking the diffusion of plants, apply equally to his relations with the animal kingdom. On a future occasion, I shall be led to speak of the instrumentality of our species in naturalizing useful animals and plants in new regions, when explaining my views of the effects which the spreading and increase of certain species exert in the extirpation of others. At present I shall confine myself to a few remarks on the involuntary aid which man lends to the dissemination of species.

In the mammiferous class our influence is chiefly displayed in increasing the number of quadrupeds which are serviceable to us, and in exterminating or reducing the number of those which are noxious.

Sometimes, however, we unintentionally promote the multiplication of inimical species, as when we introduced the rat, which was not indigenous in the new world, into all parts of America. They have been conveyed over in ships, and now infest a great multitude of islands and parts of that continent. In like manner the Norway rat has been imported into England, where it plunders our property in ships and houses.

Among birds, the house sparrow may be cited as a species known to have extended its range with the tillage of the soil. During the last century it has spread gradually over Asiatic Russia towards the north and east, always following the progress of cultivation. It made its first ap-

pearance on the Irtisch in Tobolsk, soon after the Russians had ploughed the land. It came in 1735 up the Obi to Beresow, and four years after to Naryn, about fifteen degrees of longitude farther east. In 1710, it had been seen in the higher parts of the course of the Lena, in the government of Irkutsk. In all these places it is now common, but is not yet found in the uncultivated regions of Kamtschatka.*

The great viper (*Fer de lance*), a species no less venomous than the rattle-snake, which now ravages Martinique and St. Lucia, was accidentally introduced by man, and exists in no other part of the West Indies.

Many parasitic insects which attack our persons, and some of which are supposed to be peculiar to our species, have been carried into all parts of the earth, and have as high a claim as man to an *universal* geographical distribution.

A great variety of insects have been transported in ships from one country to another, especially in warmer latitudes. Notwithstanding the coldness of our climate, we have been unable to prevent the cockroach (*Blatta orientalis*) from entering and diffusing itself in our ovens and kneading troughs, and availing itself of the artificial warmth which we afford. It is well known also that beetles, and many other kinds of ligniperdous insects, have been introduced into Great Britain in timber; especially several North American species. "The commercial relations," says Malte Brun,† "between France and India, have transported from the latter country the aphids which destroy the apple-tree, and two sorts of Neuroptera, the *lucifuga* and *flavicola*, mostly confined to Provence and the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux, where they devour the timber in the houses and naval arsenals."

Among mollusks we may mention the *Teredo navalis*, which is a native of equatorial seas, but which, by adhering to the bottom of ships, was transported to Holland, where it has been most destructive to vessels and piles. The same species has also become naturalized in England, and other countries enjoying an extensive commerce. *Bulimus undatus*, a land species of considerable size, native of Jamaica and other West Indian islands, has been imported, adhering to tropical timber, into Liverpool; and, as I learn from Mr. Broderip, is now naturalized in the woods near that town.

In all these and innumerable other instances we may regard the involuntary agency of man as strictly analogous to that of the inferior animals. Like them, we unconsciously contribute to extend or limit the geographical range and numbers of certain species, in obedience to general rules in the economy of nature, which are for the most part beyond our control.

* Gloger, Abänd. der Vögel, p. 103; Pallas, Zoog. Rosso-Asiat., tom. ii. p. 197.

† Syst. of Geog., vol. viii. p. 169.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEORIES RESPECTING THE ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION OF SPECIES.

Proposal of an hypothesis on this subject—Supposed centres or foci of creation—Why distinct provinces of animals and plants have not become more blended together—Brocchi's speculations on the loss of species (p. 57.)—Stations of plants and animals—Causes on which they depend—Stations of plants, how affected by animals—Equilibrium in the number of species, how preserved—Peculiar efficacy of insects in this task (p. 61.)—Rapidity with which certain insects multiply or decrease in numbers—Effect of omnivorous animals in preserving the equilibrium of species (p. 65.)—Reciprocal influence of aquatic and terrestrial species on each other.

Theory of Linnæus.—It would be superfluous to examine the various attempts which were made to explain the phenomena of the distribution of species alluded to in the preceding chapters, in the infancy of the sciences of botany, zoology, and physical geography. The theories, or rather conjectures, then indulged, now stand refuted by a simple statement of facts; and if Linnæus were living he would be the first to renounce the notions which he promulgated. For he imagined the habitable world to have been for a certain time limited to one small tract, the only portion of the earth's surface that was as yet laid bare by the subsidence of the primæval ocean. In this fertile spot he supposed the originals of all the species of plants which exist on this globe to have been congregated, together with the first ancestors of all animals and of the human race.

“In quâ commodè habitaverint animalia omnia, et vegetabilia lætè germinaverint.” In order to accommodate the various habitudes of so many creatures, and to provide a diversity of climate suited to their several natures, the tract in which the creation took place was supposed to have been situated in some warm region of the earth, but to have contained a lofty mountain range, on the heights and in the declivities of which were to be found all temperatures and every climate, from that of the torrid to that of the frozen zone.*

That there never was a universal ocean since the planet was inhabited, or, rather, since the oldest groups of strata yet known to contain organic remains were formed, is proved by the presence of terrestrial plants in all the older formations; and if this conclusion was not established, yet no geologist could deny that, since the first small portion of the earth was

* De terra habitabili incremento; also Prichard, *Phys. Hist. of Mankind*, vol. i. p. 17, where the hypotheses of different naturalists are enumerated.

laid dry, there have been many entire changes in the species of plants and animals inhabiting the land.

But, without dwelling on the above and other refuted theories, let us inquire whether some hypothesis cannot be substituted as simple as that of Linnæus, to which the phenomena now ascertained in regard to the distribution both of aquatic and terrestrial species may be referred. The following may, perhaps, be reconcileable with known facts:—Each species may have had its origin in a single pair, or individual, where an individual was sufficient, and species may have been created in succession at such times and in such places as to enable them to multiply and endure for an appointed period, and occupy an appointed space on the globe.

In order to explain this theory, let us suppose every living thing to be destroyed in the western hemisphere, both on the land and in the ocean, and permission to be given to man to people this great desert, by transporting into it animals and plants from the eastern hemisphere, a strict prohibition being enforced against introducing two original stocks of the same species.

Now it is easy to show that the result of such a mode of colonizing would correspond exactly, so far as regards the grouping of animals and plants, with that now observed throughout the globe. In the first place, it would be necessary for naturalists, before they imported species into particular localities, to study attentively the climate and other physical conditions of each spot. It would be no less requisite to introduce the different species in succession, so that each plant and animal might have time and opportunity to multiply before the species destined to prey upon it was admitted. Many herbs and shrubs, for example, must spread far and wide before the sheep, the deer, and the goat could be allowed to enter, lest they should devour and annihilate the original stocks of many plants, and then perish themselves for want of food. The above-mentioned herbivorous animals in their turn must be permitted to make considerable progress before the entrance of the first pair of wolves or lions. Insects must be allowed to swarm before the swallow could be permitted to skim through the air, and feast on thousands at one repast.

It is evident that, however equally in this case our original stocks were distributed over the whole surface of land and water, there would nevertheless arise distinct botanical and zoological provinces, for there are a great many natural barriers which oppose common obstacles to the advance of a variety of species. Thus, for example, almost all the animals and plants naturalized by us, towards the extremity of South America, would be unable to spread beyond a certain limit, towards the east, west, and south; because they would be stopped by the ocean, and a few of them only would succeed in reaching the cooler latitudes of the northern hemisphere, because they would be incapable of bearing the heat of the tropics, through which they must pass. In the course of

ages, undoubtedly, exceptions would arise, and some species might become common to the temperate and polar regions, or both sides of the equator; for I have before shown that the powers of diffusion conferred on some classes are very great. But we might confidently predict that these exceptions would never become so numerous as to invalidate the general rule.

Some of the plants and animals transplanted by us to the coast of Chili or Peru would never be able to cross the Andes, so as to reach the Eastern plains; nor, for a similar reason, would those first established in the Pampas, or the valleys of the Amazon and the Orinoco, ever arrive at the shores of the Pacific.

In the ocean an analogous state of things would prevail; for there, also, climate would exert a great influence in limiting the range of species, and the land would stop the migrations of aquatic tribes as effectually as the sea arrests the dispersion of the terrestrial. As certain birds, insects, and the seeds of plants can never cross the direction of prevailing winds, so currents form natural barriers to the dissemination of many oceanic races. A line of shoals may be as impassable to deep-water species, as are the Alps and the Andes to plants and animals peculiar to plains; while deep abysses may prove insuperable obstacles to the migrations of the inhabitants of shallow waters.

Supposed centres, or foci, of creation.—It is worthy of observation, that one effect of the introduction of single pairs of each species must be the confined range of certain groups in spots, which, like small islands, or solitary inland lakes, have few means of interchanging their inhabitants with adjoining regions. Now this congregating, in a small space, of many peculiar species, would give an appearance of *centres* or *foci* of creation, as they have been termed, as if there were favourite points where the creative energy has been in greater action than in others, and where the numbers of peculiar organic beings have consequently become more considerable.

I do not mean to call in question the soundness of the inferences of some botanists, as to the former existence of certain limited spots whence species of plants have been propagated, radiating, as it were, in all directions from a common centre. On the contrary, I conceive these phenomena to be the necessary consequences of the plan of nature before suggested, operating during the successive mutations of the surface, some of which the geologist can prove to have taken place subsequently to the period when many species now existing were created. In order to exemplify how this arrangement of plants may have been produced, let us imagine that, about three centuries before the discovery of St. Helena (itself of submarine volcanic origin), a multitude of new islands had been thrown up in the surrounding sea, and that these had each become clothed with plants emigrating from St. Helena, in the same manner as the wild

plants of Campania have diffused themselves over Monte Nuovo. Whenever the first botanist investigated the new archipelago, he would, in all probability, find a different assemblage of plants in each of the islands of recent formation; but, in St. Helena itself, he would meet with individuals of every species belonging to all parts of the archipelago, and some, in addition, peculiar to itself, viz., those which had not been able to obtain a passage into any one of the surrounding new-formed lands. In this case, it might be truly said that the original island was the primitive focus, or centre, of a certain type of vegetation; whereas, in the surrounding islands, there would be a smaller number of species, yet all belonging to the same group.

But this peculiar distribution of plants would not warrant the conclusion that, in the space occupied by St. Helena, there had been a greater exertion of creative power than in the spaces of equal area occupied by the new adjacent lands, because, within the period in which St. Helena had acquired its peculiar vegetation, each of the spots supposed to be subsequently converted into land may have been the birth-places of a great number of *marine* animals and plants, which may have had time to scatter themselves far and wide over the southern Atlantic.

Why distinct provinces not more blended.—Perhaps it may be objected to some parts of the foregoing train of reasoning, that during the lapse of past ages, especially during many partial revolutions of the globe of comparatively modern date, different zoological and botanical provinces ought to have become more confounded and blended together—that the distribution of species approaches too nearly to what might have been expected, if animals and plants had been introduced into the globe when its physical geography had already assumed the features which it now wears; whereas we know that, in certain districts, considerable geographical changes have taken place since species identical with those now in being were created.

Brocchi's speculations on loss of species.—These, and many kindred topics, cannot be fully discussed until we have considered, not merely the general laws which may regulate the first introduction of species, but those which may limit their *duration* on the earth. Brocchi, whose untimely death in Egypt is deplored by all who have the progress of geology at heart, has remarked, when hazarding some interesting conjectures respecting “the loss of species,” that a modern naturalist had no small assurance, who declared “that individuals alone were capable of destruction, and that species were so perpetuated that nature could not annihilate them, so long as the planet lasted, or at least that nothing less than the shock of a comet, or some similar disaster, could put an end to their existence.”*

* Necker, *Phytozool. Philosoph.*, p. 21. Brocchi, *Conch. Foss. Subap.*, tome i. p. 220.

The Italian geologist, on the contrary, had satisfied himself, that many species of testacea, which formerly inhabited the Mediterranean, had become extinct, although a great number of others, which had been the contemporaries of those lost races, still survived. He came to the opinion, that about half the species which peopled the waters when the Subapennine strata were deposited had gone out of existence ; and in this inference he does not appear to have been far wrong.

But, instead of seeking a solution of this problem, like some other geologists of his time, in a violent and general catastrophe, Brocchi endeavoured to imagine some regular and constant law by which species might be made to disappear from the earth gradually and in succession. The death, he suggested, of a species might depend, like that of individuals, on certain peculiarities of constitution conferred upon them at their birth ; and as the longevity of the one depends on a certain force of vitality, which, after a period, grows weaker and weaker, so the duration of the other may be governed by the quantity of prolific power bestowed upon the species, which, after a season, may decline in energy, so that the fecundity and multiplication of individuals may be gradually lessened from century to century, "until that fatal term arrives when the embryo, incapable of extending and developing itself, abandons, almost at the instant of its formation, the slender principle of life by which it was scarcely animated,—and so all dies with it."

Now we might coincide in opinion with the Italian naturalist, as to the gradual extinction of species one after another, by the operation of regular and constant causes, without admitting an inherent principle of deterioration in their physiological attributes. We might concede, "that many species are on the decline, and that the day is not far distant when they will cease to exist ;" yet deem it consistent with what we know of the nature of organic beings, to believe that the last individuals of each species retain their prolific powers in their full intensity.

Brocchi has himself speculated on the share which a change of climate may have had in rendering the Mediterranean unfit for the habitation of certain testacea, which still continued to thrive in the Indian Ocean, and of others which were now only represented by analogous forms within the tropics. He must also have been aware that other extrinsic causes, such as the progress of human population, or the increase of some one of the inferior animals, might gradually lead to the extirpation of a particular species, although its fecundity might remain to the last unimpaired. If, therefore, amid the vicissitudes of the animate and inanimate world, there are known causes capable of bringing about the decline and extirpation of species, it became him thoroughly to investigate the full extent to which these might operate, before he speculated on any cause of so purely hypothetical a kind as "the diminution of the prolific virtue."

If it could have been shown that some wild plant had insensibly

dwindled away and died out, as sometimes happens to cultivated varieties propagated by cuttings, even though climate, soil, and every other circumstance should continue identically the same—if any animal had perished while the physical condition of the earth, and the number and force of its foes, with every other extrinsic cause, remained unaltered, then might we have some ground for suspecting that the infirmities of age creep on as naturally on species as upon individuals. But, in the absence of such observations, let us turn to another class of facts, and examine attentively the circumstances which determine the *stations* of particular animals and plants, and perhaps we shall discover, in the vicissitudes to which these stations are exposed, a cause fully adequate to explain the phenomena under consideration.

Stations of plants and animals.—Stations comprehend all the circumstances, whether relating to the animate or inanimate world, which determine whether a given plant or animal can exist in a given place; so that if it be shown that stations can become essentially modified by the influence of known causes, it will follow that species, as well as individuals, are mortal.

Every naturalist is familiar with the fact, that although in a particular country, such as Great Britain, there may be more than three thousand species of plants, ten thousand insects, and a great variety in each of the other classes; yet there will not be more than a hundred, perhaps not half that number, inhabiting any given locality. There may be no want of space in the supposed tract: it may be a large mountain, or an extensive moor, or a great river-plain, containing room enough for individuals of every species in our island; yet the spot will be occupied by a few to the exclusion of many, and these few are enabled, throughout long periods, to maintain their ground successfully against every intruder, notwithstanding the facilities which species enjoy, by virtue of their power of diffusion, of invading adjacent territories.

The principal causes which enable a certain assemblage of plants thus to maintain their ground against all others depend, as is well known, on the relations between the physiological nature of each species, and the climate, exposure, soil, and other physical conditions of the locality. Some plants live only on rocks, others in meadows, a third class in marshes. Of the latter, some delight in a fresh-water morass,—others in salt marshes, where their roots may copiously absorb saline particles. Some prefer an alpine region in a warm latitude, where, during the heat of summer, they are constantly irrigated by the cool waters of melting snows. To others loose sand, so fatal to the generality of species, affords the most proper station. The *Carex arenaria* and the *Elymus arenarius* acquire their full vigour on a sandy dune, obtaining an ascendancy over the very plants which in a stiff clay would immediately stifle them.

Where the soil of a district is of so peculiar a nature that it is ex-

tremely favourable to certain species, and agrees ill with every other, the former get exclusive possession of the ground, and, as in the case of heaths, live in societies. In like manner the Bog moss (*Sphagnum palustre*) is fully developed in peaty swamps, and becomes, like the heath, in the language of botanists, a social plant. Such monopolies, however, are not common, for they are checked by various causes. Not only are many species endowed with equal powers to obtain and keep possession of similar stations, but each plant, for reasons not fully explained by the physiologist, has the property of rendering the soil where it has grown less fitted for the support of other individuals of its own species, or even other species, of the same family. Yet the same spot, so far from being impoverished, is improved, for plants of *another* family. Animals also interfere most actively to preserve an equilibrium in the vegetable kingdom.

Equilibrium in the number of species, how preserved.—"All the plants of a given country," says De Candolle, in his usual spirited style, "are at war one with another. The first which establish themselves by chance in a particular spot tend, by the mere occupancy of space, to exclude other species—the greater choke the smaller; the longest lives replace those which last for a shorter period; the more prolific gradually make themselves masters of the ground, which species multiplying more slowly would otherwise fill."

In this continual strife, it is not always the resources of the plant itself which enable it to maintain or extend its ground. Its success depends, in a great measure, on the number of its foes or allies, among the animals and plants inhabiting the same region. Thus, for example, a herb which loves the shade may multiply, if some tree with spreading boughs and dense foliage flourish in the neighbourhood. Another, which, if unassisted, would be overpowered by the rank growth of some hardy competitor, is secure; because its leaves are unpalatable to cattle, which, on the other hand, annually crop down its antagonist, and rarely suffer it to ripen its seed.

Oftentimes we see some herb which has flowered in the midst of a thorny shrub, when all the other individuals of the same species, in the open fields around, are eaten down, and cannot bring their seed to maturity. In this case, the shrub has lent his armour of spines and prickles to protect the defenceless herb against the mouths of the cattle; and thus a few individuals which occupied, perhaps, the most unfavourable station in regard to exposure, soil, and other circumstances, may, nevertheless, by the aid of an ally, become the principal source whereby the winds are supplied with seeds which perpetuate the species throughout the surrounding tract.

In the above example we see one plant shielding another from the attacks of animals; but instances are, perhaps, still more numerous,

where some animal defends a plant against the enmity of some other subject of the vegetable kingdom.

Scarcely any beast, observes a Swedish naturalist, will touch the nettle, but fifty different kinds of insects are fed by it.* Some of these seize upon the root, others upon the stem; some eat the leaves; others devour the seeds and flowers: but for this multitude of enemies, the nettle would annihilate a great number of plants. Linnæus tells us, in his Tour in Scania, that goats were turned into an island which abounded with the *Agrostis arundinacea*, where they perished by famine; but horses which followed them grew fat on the same plant. The goat, also, he says, thrives on the meadow-sweet, and water-hemlock, plants which are injurious to cattle.†

Agency of insects.—Every plant, observes Wilcke, has its proper insect allotted to it to curb its luxuriancy, and to prevent it from multiplying to the exclusion of others. “Thus grass in meadows sometimes flourishes so as to exclude all other plants; here the *Phalæna graminis* (*Bombyx gram.*), with her numerous progeny, find a well-spread table; they multiply in immense numbers, and the farmer for some years laments the failure of his crop; but, the grass being consumed, the moths die with hunger, or remove to another place. Now the quantity of grass being greatly diminished, the other plants, which were before choked by it, spring up, and the ground becomes variegated with a multitude of different species of flowers. Had not Nature given a commission to this minister for that purpose, the grass would destroy a great number of species of vegetables, of which the equilibrium is now kept up.”‡

In the above passage allusion is made to the ravages committed in 1740 and the two following years in many provinces in Sweden, by a most destructive insect. The same moth is said never to touch the fox-tail grass, so that it may be classed as a most active ally and benefactor of that species, and as peculiarly instrumental in preserving it in its present abundance.§ A discovery of Rolander, cited in the treatise of Wilcke above mentioned, affords a good illustration of the checks and counter-checks which Nature has appointed to preserve the balance of power among species. “The *Phalæna strobilella* has the fir cone assigned to it to deposit its eggs upon; the young caterpillars coming out of the shell consume the cone and superfluous seed; but, lest the destruction, should be too general, the *Ichneumon strobilellæ* lays its eggs in the caterpillar, inserting its long tail in the openings of the cone till it touches the included insect, for its body is too large to enter. Thus it fixes its minute egg upon the caterpillar, which being hatched destroys it.”||

* Amœn. Acad. vol. vi. p. 17. § 12.

† Ibid., vol. vii. p. 409.

‡ Ibid., vol. vi. p. 17. § 11, 12.

§ Kirby and Spence, vol. i. p. 178.

|| Amœn. Acad., vol. vi. § 14.

Entomologists enumerate many parallel cases where insects, appropriated to certain plants, are kept down by other insects, and these again by parasites expressly appointed to prey on them.* Few, perhaps, are in the habit of duly appreciating the extent to which insects are active in preserving the balance of species among plants, and thus regulating indirectly the relative numbers of many of the higher orders of terrestrial animals.

The peculiarity of their agency consists in their power of suddenly multiplying their numbers to a degree which could only be accomplished in a considerable lapse of time in any of the larger animals, and then as instantaneously relapsing, without the intervention of any violent disturbing cause, into their former insignificance.

If, for the sake of employing, on different but rare occasions, a power of many hundred horses, we were under the necessity of feeding all these animals at great cost in the intervals when their services were not required, we should greatly admire the invention of a machine, such as the steam-engine, which was capable at any moment of exerting the same degree of strength without any consumption of food during periods of inaction. The same kind of admiration is strongly excited when we contemplate the powers of insect life, in the creation of which nature has been so prodigal. A scanty number of minute individuals, to be detected only by careful research, are ready in a few days, weeks, or months, to give birth to myriads, which may repress any degree of monopoly in another species, or remove nuisances, such as dead carcasses, which might taint the air. But no sooner has the destroying commission been executed than the gigantic power becomes dormant—each of the mighty host soon reaches the term of its transient existence, and the season arrives when the whole species passes naturally into the egg, and thence into the larva and pupa state. In this defenceless condition it may be destroyed either by the elements, or by the augmentation of some of its numerous foes, which may prey upon it in these stages of its transformation; or it often happens that in the following year the season proves unfavourable to the hatching of the eggs or the development of the pupæ.

Thus the swarming myriads depart which may have covered the vegetation like the aphides, or darkened the air like locusts. In almost every season there are some species which in this manner put forth their strength, and then, like Milton's spirits, which thronged the spacious hall, "reduce to smallest forms their shapes immense"—

——— So thick the æry crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! they but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs.

* Kirby and Spence, vol. iv. p. 218.

A few examples will illustrate the mode in which this force operates. It is well known that, among the countless species of the insect creation, some feed on animal, others on vegetable matter; and, upon considering a catalogue of eight thousand British insects and arachnidæ, Mr. Kirby found that these two divisions were nearly a counterpoise to each other, the carnivorous being somewhat preponderant. There are also distinct species, some appointed to consume living, others dead or putrid animal and vegetable substances. One female, of *Musca carnaria*, will give birth to twenty thousand young; and the larvæ of many flesh-flies devour so much food in twenty-four hours, and grow so quickly, as to increase their weight two hundred-fold! In five days after being hatched they arrive at their full growth and size, so that there was ground, says Kirby, for the assertion of Linnæus, that three flies of *M. vomitoria* could devour a dead horse as quickly as a lion;* and another Swedish naturalist remarks, that so great are the powers of propagation of a single species even of the smallest insects, that each can commit, when required, more ravages than the elephant.†

Next to locusts, the aphides, perhaps, exert the greatest power over the vegetable world, and, like them, are sometimes so numerous as to darken the air. The multiplication of these little creatures is without parallel, and almost every plant has its peculiar species. Reaumur has proved that in five generations one aphis may be the progenitor of 5,904,900,000 descendants; and it is supposed that in one year there may be twenty generations.‡ Mr. Curtis observes that, as among caterpillars we find some that are constantly and unalterably attached to one or more particular species of plants, and others that feed indiscriminately on most sorts of herbage, so it is precisely with the aphides: some are particular, others more general, feeders; and as they resemble other insects in this respect, so they do also in being more abundant in some years than in others.§ In 1793 they were the chief, and in 1798 the sole, cause of the failure of the hops. In 1794, a season almost unparalleled for drought, the hop was perfectly free from them; while peas and beans, especially the former, suffered very much from their depredations.

The ravages of the caterpillars of some of our smaller moths afford a good illustration of the temporary increase of a species. The oak-trees of a considerable wood have been stripped of their leaves as bare as in winter, by the caterpillars of a small green moth (*Tortrix viridana*), which has been observed the year following not to abound.|| The silver Y moth (*Plusia gamma*,) although one of our common species, is not dreaded by us for its devastations; but legions of their caterpillars have at times created alarm in France, as in 1735. Reaumur observes that the

* Kirby and Spence, vol. i. p. 250.

† Wilcke, Amæn. Acad., chap. ii.

‡ Kirby and Spence, vol. i. p. 174.

§ Trans. Linn. Soc., vol. vi.

|| Lib. Ent. Know., Insect Trans., p. 203. See Haworth, Lep.

female moth lays about four hundred eggs; so that if twenty caterpillars were distributed in a garden, and all lived through the winter and became moths in the succeeding May, the eggs laid by these, if half of them were female and all fertile, would in the next generation produce 800,000 caterpillars.* A modern writer, therefore, justly observes that, did not Providence put causes in operation to keep them in due bounds, the caterpillars of this moth alone, leaving out of consideration the two thousand other British species, might soon destroy more than half of our vegetation.†

In the latter part of the last century an ant most destructive to the sugar-cane (*Formica saccharivora*), appeared in such infinite hosts in the island of Granada, as to put a stop to the cultivation of that vegetable. Their numbers were incredible. The plantations and roads were filled with them; many domestic quadrupeds, together with rats, mice, and reptiles, and even birds, perished in consequence of this plague. It was not till 1780 that they were at length annihilated by torrents of rain which accompanied a dreadful hurricane.‡

Devastations caused by locusts.—We may conclude by mentioning some instances of the devastations of locusts in various countries. Among other parts of Africa, Cyrenaica has been at different periods infested by myriads of these creatures, which have consumed nearly every green thing. The effect of the havoc committed by them may be estimated by the famine they occasioned. St. Augustin mentions a plague of this kind in Africa which destroyed no less than eight hundred thousand men in the kingdom of Masinissa alone, and many more upon the territories bordering upon the sea. It is also related, that in the year 591 an infinite army of locusts migrated from Africa into Italy; and, after grievously ravaging the country, were cast into the sea, when there arose a pestilence from their stench which carried off nearly a million of men and beasts.

In the Venetian territory, also, in 1478, more than thirty thousand persons are said to have perished in a famine occasioned by this scourge; and other instances are recorded of their devastations in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, &c. In different parts of Russia also, Hungary, and Poland,—in Arabia and India, and other countries,—their visitations have been periodically experienced. Although they have a preference for certain plants, yet, when these are consumed, they will attack almost all the remainder. In the accounts of the invasions of locusts, the statements which appear most marvellous relate to the prodigious mass of matter which encumbers the sea wherever they are blown into it, and the pestilence arising from its putrefaction. Their dead bodies are said to have

* Reaumur, ii. 337.

† Lib. Ent. Know., Insect Trans., p. 212.

‡ Kirby and Spence, vol. i. p. 183. Castle, Phil. Trans., xxx. 346.

been, in some places, heaped one upon another, to the depth of four feet; in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania; and when, in southern Africa, they were driven into the sea by a north-west wind, they formed, says Barrow, along the shore, for fifty miles, a bank three or four feet high.* But when we consider that forests are stripped of their foliage, and the earth of its green garment, for thousands of square miles, it may well be supposed that the volume of animal matter produced may equal that of great herds of quadrupeds and flights of large birds suddenly precipitated into the sea.

The occurrence of such events at certain intervals, in hot countries, like the severe winters and damp summers returning after a series of years in the temperate zone, affect the proportional numbers of almost all classes of animals and plants, and are probably fatal to the existence of many which would otherwise thrive there; while, on the contrary, they must be favourable to certain species which, if deprived of such aid, might not maintain their ground.

Although it may usually be remarked that the extraordinary increase of some one species is immediately followed and checked by the multiplication of another, yet this does not always happen; partly because many species feed in common on the same kinds of food, and partly because many kinds of food are often consumed indifferently by one and the same species. In the former case, where a variety of different animals have precisely the same taste, as, for example, when many insectivorous birds and reptiles devour alike some particular fly or beetle, the unusual numbers of these insects may cause only a slight and almost imperceptible augmentation of each of these species of bird and reptile. In the other instance, where one animal preys on others of almost every class, as, for example, where our English buzzard devour not only small quadrupeds, as rabbits and field-mice, but also birds, frogs, lizards, and insects, the profusion of any one of these last may cause all such general feeders to subsist more exclusively upon the species thus in excess, by which means the balance may be restored.

Agency of omnivorous animals.—The number of species which are nearly omnivorous is considerable; and although every animal has, perhaps, a predilection for some one description of food rather than another, yet some are not even confined to one of the great kingdoms of the organic world. Thus, when the racoon of the West Indies can procure neither fowls, fish, snails, nor insects, it will attack the sugar-canes, and devour various kinds of grain. The civits, when animal food is scarce, maintain themselves on fruits and roots.

Numerous birds, which feed indiscriminately on insects and plants, are perhaps more instrumental than any other of the terrestrial tribes in pre-

* Travels in Africa, p. 257. Kirby and Spence, vol. i. p. 215.

serving a constant equilibrium between the relative numbers of different classes of animals and vegetables. If the insects become very numerous, and devour the plants, these birds will immediately derive a larger portion of their subsistence from insects, just as the Arabians, Syrians and Hottentots feed on locusts, when the locusts devour their crops.

Reciprocal influence of aquatic and terrestrial species.—The intimate relation of the inhabitants of the water to those of the land, and the influence exerted by each on the relative number of species, must not be overlooked amongst the complicated causes which determine the existence of animals and plants in certain regions. A large portion of the amphibious quadrupeds and reptiles prey partly on aquatic plants and animals, and in part on terrestrial; and a deficiency of one kind of prey causes them to have immediate recourse to the other. The voracity of certain insects, as the dragon-fly, for example, is confined to the water during one stage of their transformations, and in their perfect state to the air. Innumerable water-birds, both of rivers and seas, derive in like manner their food indifferently from either element; so that the abundance or scarcity of prey in one induces them either to forsake or more constantly to hunt the other. Thus an intimate connexion between the state of the animate creation in a lake or river, and in the adjoining dry land, is maintained; or between a continent, with its lakes and rivers, and the ocean. It is well known that many birds migrate, during stormy seasons, from the sea-shore into the interior, in search of food; while others, on the contrary, urged by like wants, forsake their inland haunts, and live on substances rejected by the tide.

The migration of fish into rivers during the spawning season supplies another link of the same kind. Suppose the salmon to be reduced in numbers by some marine foes, as by seals and grampuses, the consequence must often be, that in the course of a few years the otters at the distance of several hundred miles inland will be lessened in number from the scarcity of fish. On the other hand, if there be a dearth of food for the young fry of the salmon in rivers and estuaries, so that few return to the sea, the sand eels and other marine species, which are usually kept down by the salmon, will swarm in greater profusion.

It is unnecessary to accumulate a greater number of illustrations in order to prove that the stations of different plants and animals depend on a great complication of circumstances,—on an immense variety of relations in the state of the animate and inanimate worlds. Every plant requires a certain climate, soil, and other conditions, and often the aid of many animals, in order to maintain its ground. Many animals feed on certain plants, being often restricted to a small number, and sometimes to one only; other members of the animal kingdom feed on plant-eating species, and thus become dependent on the conditions of the *stations* not only of their prey, but of the plants consumed by them.

Having duly reflected on the nature and extent of these mutual relations in the different parts of the organic and inorganic worlds, we may next proceed to examine the results which may be anticipated from the fluctuations now continually in progress in the state of the earth's surface, and in the geographical distribution of its living productions.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH CONSTITUTE THE STATIONS OF ANIMALS ARE CHANGEABLE.

Extension of the range of one species alters the condition of many others—The first appearance of a new species causes the chief disturbance—Changes known to have resulted from the advance of human population (p. 71.)—Whether man increases the productive powers of the earth—Indigenous quadrupeds and birds extirpated in Great Britain—Extinction of the Dodo (p. 74.)—Rapid propagation of domestic quadrupeds in America.—Power of exterminating species no prerogative of man (p. 78.)—Concluding remarks.

WE have seen that the stations of animals and plants depend not merely on the influence of external agents in the inanimate world, and the relations of that influence to the structure and habits of each species, but also on the state of the contemporary living beings which inhabit the same part of the globe. In other words, the possibility of the existence of a certain species in a given place, or of its thriving more or less therein, is determined not merely by temperature, humidity, soil, elevation, and other circumstances of the like kind; but also by the existence or non-existence, the abundance or scarcity, of a particular assemblage of other plants and animals in the same region.

If it be shown that both these classes of circumstances, whether relating to the animate or inanimate creation, are perpetually changing, it will follow that species are subject to incessant vicissitudes; and if the result of these mutations, in the course of ages, be so great as materially to affect the general condition of *stations*, it will follow that the successive destruction of species must now be part of the regular and constant order of nature.

Extension of the range of one species alters the condition of others.—It will be desirable, first, to consider the effects which every extension

of the numbers or geographical range of one species must produce on the condition of others inhabiting the same regions. When the necessary consequences of such extensions have been fully explained, the reader will be prepared to appreciate the important influence which slight modifications in the physical geography of the globe may exert on the condition of organic beings.

In the first place, it is clear that when any region is stocked with as great a variety of animals and plants as the productive powers of that region will enable it to support, the addition of any new species, or the *permanent* numerical increase of one previously established, must always be attended either by the local extermination or the numerical decrease of some other species.

There may undoubtedly be considerable fluctuations from year to year, and the equilibrium may be again restored without any permanent alteration; for, in particular seasons, a greater supply of heat, humidity, or other causes, may augment the total quantity of vegetable produce, in which case all the animals subsisting on vegetable food, and others which prey on them, may multiply without any one species giving way: but whilst the aggregate quantity of vegetable produce remains unaltered, the progressive increase of one animal or plant implies the decline of another.

All agriculturists and gardeners are familiar with the fact that, when weeds intrude themselves into the space appropriated to cultivated species, the latter are starved in their growth or stifled. If we abandon for a short time a field or garden, a host of indigenous plants,

The darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory,

pour in and obtain the mastery, extirpating the exotics, or putting an end to the monopoly of some native plants.

If we inclose a park, and stock it with as many deer as the herbage will support, we cannot add sheep without lessening the number of the deer; nor can other herbivorous species be subsequently introduced, unless the individuals of each species in the park become fewer in proportion.

So, if there be an island where leopards are the only beasts of prey, and the lion, tiger, and hyæna afterwards enter, the leopards, if they stand their ground, will be reduced in number. If the locusts then arrive and swarm greatly, this may deprive a larger number of plant-eating animals of their food, and thereby cause a famine, not only among them, but among the beasts of prey; certain species, perhaps, which had the weakest footing in the island may thus be annihilated.

We have seen how many distinct geographical provinces there are of aquatic and terrestrial species, and how great are the powers of migration conferred on different classes, whereby the inhabitants of one region may

be enabled from time to time to invade another, and do actually so migrate and diffuse themselves over new countries. Now, although our knowledge of the history of the animate creation dates from so recent a period, that we can scarcely trace the advance or decline of any animal or plant, except in those cases where the influence of man has intervened; yet we can easily conceive what must happen when some new colony of wild animals or plants enters a region for the first time, and succeeds in establishing itself.

Supposed effects of the first entrance of the polar bear into Iceland.—

Let us consider how great are the devastations committed at certain periods by the Greenland bears, when they are drifted to the shores of Iceland in considerable numbers on the ice. These periodical invasions are formidable even to man; so that when the bears arrive, the inhabitants collect together, and go in pursuit of them with fire-arms—each native who slays one being rewarded by the king of Denmark. The Danes of old, when they landed in their marauding expeditions upon our coast, hardly excited more alarm; nor did our islanders muster more promptly for the defence of their lives and property against a common enemy, than the modern Icelanders against these formidable brutes. It often happens, says Henderson, that the natives are pursued by the bear when he has been long at sea, and when his natural ferocity has been heightened by the keenness of hunger; if unarmed, it is frequently by stratagem only that they make their escape.*

Let us cast our thoughts back to the period when the first polar bears reached Iceland, before it was colonized by the Norwegians in 874; we may imagine the breaking up of an immense barrier of ice, like that which, in 1816 and the following year, disappeared from the east coast of Greenland, which it had surrounded for four centuries. By the aid of such means of transportation a great number of these quadrupeds might effect a landing at the same time, and the havoc which they would make among the species previously settled in the island would be terrific. The deer, foxes, seals, and even birds, on which these animals sometimes prey, would be soon thinned down.

But this would be a part only, and probably an insignificant portion, of the aggregate amount of change brought about by the new invader. The plants on which the deer fed being less consumed in consequence of the lessened numbers of that herbivorous species, would soon supply more food to several insects, and probably to some terrestrial testacea, so that the latter would gain ground. The increase of these would furnish other insects and birds with food, so that the numbers of these last would be augmented. The diminution of the seals would afford a respite to some fish which they had persecuted; and these fish, in their turn, would then

* Journal of a Residence in Iceland, p. 276.

multiply and press upon their peculiar prey. Many water-fowls, the eggs and young of which are devoured by foxes, would increase when the foxes were thinned down by the bears; and the fish on which the water-fowls subsisted would then, in their turn, be less numerous. Thus the numerical proportions of a great number of the inhabitants, both of the land and sea, might be permanently altered by the settling of one new species in the region; and the changes caused indirectly would ramify through all classes of the living creation, and be almost endless.

An actual illustration of what we have here only proposed hypothetically, is in some degree afforded by the selection of small islands by the eider duck for its residence during the season of incubation, its nests being seldom if ever found on the shores of the main land, or even of a large island. The Icelanders are so well aware of this, that they have expended a great deal of labour in forming artificial islands, by separating from the main land certain promontories, joined to it by narrow isthmuses. This insular position is necessary to guard against the destruction of the eggs and young birds, by foxes, dogs, and other animals. One year, says Hooker, it happened that, in the small island of Vidoe, adjoining the coast of Iceland, a fox got over *upon the ice*, and caused great alarm, as an immense number of ducks were then sitting on their eggs or young ones. It was long before he was taken, which was at last, however, effected by bringing another fox to the island, and fastening it by a string near the haunt of the former, by which he was allured within shot of the hunter.*

The first appearance of a new species causes the chief disturbance.—It is usually the first appearance of an animal or plant, in a region to which it was previously a stranger, that gives rise to the chief alteration; since, after a time, an equilibrium is again established. But it must require ages before such a new adjustment of the relative forces of so many conflicting agents can be definitely settled. The causes in simultaneous action are so numerous, that they admit of an almost infinite number of combinations; and it is necessary that all these should have occurred once before the total amount of change, capable of flowing from any new disturbing force, can be estimated.

Thus, for example, suppose that once in two centuries a frost of unusual intensity, or a volcanic eruption of great violence, accompanied by floods from the melting of glaciers, should occur in Iceland; or an epidemic disease, fatal to the larger number of individuals of some one species, and not affecting others,—these, and a variety of other contingencies, all of which may occur at once, or at periods separated by different intervals of time, ought to happen before it would be possible for us to declare what ultimate alteration the presence of any new comer, such as

* Tour in Iceland, vol. i. p. 64, second edition.

the bear before mentioned, might occasion in the animal population of the isle.

Every new condition in the state of the organic or inorganic creation, a new animal or plant, an additional snow-clad mountain, any permanent change, however slight in comparison to the whole, gives rise to a new order of things, and may make a material change in regard to some one or more species. Yet a swarm of locusts, or a frost of extreme intensity, or an epidemic disease, may pass away without any great apparent derangement; no species may be lost, and all may soon recover their former relative numbers, because the same scourges may have visited the region again and again, at preceding periods. Every plant that was incapable of resisting such a degree of cold, every animal which was exposed to be entirely cut off by an epidemic or by famine, caused by the consumption of vegetation by the locusts, may have perished already, so that the subsequent recurrence of similar catastrophes is attended only by a temporary change.

Changes caused by Man.

We are best acquainted with the mutations brought about by the progress of human population, and the growth of plants and animals favoured by man. To these, therefore, we should in the first instance turn our attention. If we conclude, from the concurrent testimony of history and of the evidence yielded by geological data, that man is, comparatively speaking, of very modern origin, we must at once perceive how great a revolution in the state of the animate world the increase of the human race, considered merely as consumers of a certain quantity of organic matter, must necessarily cause.

Whether man increases the productive powers of the earth.—It may, perhaps, be said, that man has, in some degree, compensated for the appropriation to himself of so much food, by artificially improving the natural productiveness of soils, by irrigation, manure, and a judicious intermixture of mineral ingredients conveyed from different localities. But it admits of reasonable doubt whether, upon the whole, we fertilize or impoverish the lands which we occupy. This assertion may seem startling to many; because they are so much in the habit of regarding the sterility or productiveness of land in relation to the wants of man, and not as regards the organic world generally. It is difficult, at first, to conceive, if a morass is converted into arable land, and made to yield a crop of grain, even of moderate abundance, that we have not improved the capabilities of the habitable surface—that we have not empowered it to support a larger quantity of organic life. In such cases, however, a tract, before of no utility to man, may be reclaimed, and become of high agricultural importance, though it may, nevertheless, yield a scantier vegetation. If

a lake be drained, and turned into a meadow, the space will provide sustenance to man and many terrestrial animals servicable to him, but not, perhaps, so much food as it previously yielded to the aquatic races.

If the pestiferous Pontine Marshes were drained, and covered with corn, like the plains of the Po, they might, perhaps, feed a smaller number of animals than they do now ; for these morasses are filled with herds of buffaloes and swine, and they swarm with birds, reptiles, and insects.

The felling of dense and lofty forests, which covered, even within the records of history, a considerable space on the globe, now tenanted by civilized man, must generally have lessened the amount of vegetable food throughout the space where these woods grew. We must also take into our account the area covered by towns, and a still larger surface occupied by roads.

If we force the soil to bear extraordinary crops one year, we are, perhaps, compelled to let it lie fallow the next. But nothing so much counterbalances the fertilizing effects of human art as the extensive cultivation of foreign herbs and shrubs, which, although they are often more nutritious to man, seldom thrive with the same rank luxuriance as the native plants of a district. Man is, in truth, continually striving to diminish the natural diversity of the *stations* of animals and plants in every country, and to reduce them all to a small number fitted for species of economical use. He may succeed perfectly in attaining his object, even though the vegetation be comparatively meagre, and the total amount of animal life be greatly lessened.

Spix and Martius have given a lively description of the incredible number of insects which lay waste the crops in Brazil, besides swarms of monkeys, flocks of parrots, and other birds, as well as the paca, agouti, and wild swine. They describe the torment which the planter and the naturalist suffer from the mosquitoes, and the devastation of the ants and *blattæ* ; they speak of the dangers to which they were exposed from the jaguar, the poisonous serpents, lizards, scorpions, centipedes, and spiders. But with the increasing population and cultivation of the country, observe these naturalists, these evils will gradually diminish ; when the inhabitants have cut down the woods, drained the marshes, made roads in all directions, and founded villages and towns, man will, by degrees, triumph over the rank vegetation and the noxious animals, and all the elements will second and amply recompense his activity.*

The number of human beings now peopling the earth is supposed to amount to eight hundred millions, so that we may easily understand how great a number of beasts of prey, birds, and animals of every class, this prodigious population must have displaced, independently of the

* Travels in Brazil, vol. i. p. 260.

still more important consequences which have followed from the derangement brought about by man in the relative numerical strength of particular species.

Indigenous quadrupeds and birds extirpated in Great Britain.—Let us make some inquiries into the extent of the influence which the progress of society has exerted during the last seven or eight centuries, in altering the distribution of indigenous British animals. Dr. Fleming has prosecuted this inquiry with his usual zeal and ability; and in a memoir on the subject has enumerated the best-authenticated examples of the decrease or extirpation of certain species during a period when our population has made the most rapid advances. I shall offer a brief outline of his results.*

The stag, as well as the fallow deer and the roe, were formerly so abundant in our island, that, according to Lesley, from five hundred to a thousand were sometimes slain at a hunting-match; but the native races would already have been extinguished, had they not been carefully preserved in certain forests. The otter, the marten, and the polecat, were also in sufficient numbers to be pursued for the sake of their fur; but they have now been reduced within very narrow bounds. The wild cat and fox have also been sacrificed throughout the greater part of the country, for the security of the poultry-yard or the fold. Badgers have been expelled from nearly every district, which at former periods they inhabited.

Besides these, which have been driven out from some haunts, and every where reduced in number, there are some which have been wholly extirpated; such as the ancient breed of indigenous horses, and the wild boar; of the wild oxen, a few remains are still preserved in the parks of some of our nobility. The beaver, which was eagerly sought after for its fur, had become scarce at the close of the ninth century; and, by the twelfth century, was only to be met with, according to Giraldus de Barri, in one river in Wales, and another in Scotland. The wolf, once so much dreaded by our ancestors, is said to have maintained its ground in Ireland so late as the beginning of the eighteenth century (1710), though it had been extirpated in Scotland thirty years before, and in England at a much earlier period. The bear, which, in Wales, was regarded as a beast of the chase equal to the hare or the boar,† only perished, as a native of Scotland, in the year 1057.‡

Many native birds of prey have also been the subjects of unremitting persecution. The eagles, larger hawks, and ravens, have disappeared from the more cultivated districts. The haunts of the mallard, the snipe, the redshank, and the bittern, have been drained equally with the summer dwellings of the lapwing and the curlew. But these species still linger

* Ed. Phil. Journ. No. xxii. p. 287. Oct. 1824.

† Ray, Syn. Quad., p. 214.

‡ Fleming Ed. Phil. Journ., No. xxii. p. 295.

in some portion of the British isles ; whereas the larger capercaillies, or wood grouse, formerly natives of the pine-forests of Ireland and Scotland, have been destroyed within the last sixty years. The egret and the crane, which appear to have been formerly very common in Scotland, are now only occasional visitants.*

The bustard (*Otis tarda*), observes Graves, in his British Ornithology,† “was formerly seen in the downs and heaths of various parts of our island, in flocks of forty or fifty birds ; whereas it is now a circumstance of rare occurrence to meet with a single individual.” Bewick also remarks, “that they were formerly more common in this island than at present ; they are now found only in the open counties of the south and east—in the plains of Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and some parts of Yorkshire.” In the few years that have elapsed since Bewick wrote, this bird has entirely disappeared from Wiltshire and Dorsetshire.‡

These changes, it may be observed, are derived from very imperfect memorials, and relate only to the larger and more conspicuous animals inhabiting a small spot on the globe ; but they cannot fail to exalt our conception of the enormous revolutions which, in the course of several thousand years, the whole human species must have effected.

Extinction of the Dodo.—The kangaroo and the emu are retreating rapidly before the progress of colonization in Australia ; and it scarcely admits of doubt, that the general cultivation of that country must lead to the extirpation of both. The most striking example of the loss, even within the last two centuries, of a remarkable species, is that of the dodo—a bird first seen by the Dutch, when they landed on the Isle of France, at that time uninhabited, immediately after the discovery of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope. It was of a large size, and singular form ; its wings short, like those of an ostrich, and wholly incapable of sustaining its heavy body, even for a short flight. In its general appearance it differed from the ostrich, cassowary, or any known bird.

Many naturalists gave figures of the dodo after the commencement of the seventeenth century ; and there is a painting of it in the British Museum, which is said to have been taken from a living individual. Beneath the painting is a leg, in a fine state of preservation, which ornithologists are agreed cannot belong to any other known bird. In the museum at Oxford, also, there is a foot and a head, in an imperfect state ; but M. Cuvier doubts the identity of this species with that of which the painting is preserved in London.

In spite of the most active search, during the last century, no information respecting the dodo was obtained, and some authors have gone so far as to pretend that it never existed ; but, amongst a great mass of satisfac-

* Fleming, Ed. Phil. Journ., No. xxii. p. 202.

† Vol. iii., London, 1821.

‡ Land Birds, vol. i. p. 316, ed. 1821.

tory evidence in favour of the recent existence of this species, we may mention that an assemblage of fossil bones were recently discovered under a bed of lava, in the Isle of France, and sent to the Paris Museum, by M. Desjardins. They almost all belonged to a large living species of land-tortoise, called *Testudo Indica*; but amongst them were the head, sternum, and humerus of the dodo. M. Cuvier showed me these valuable remains in Paris, and assured me that they left no doubt in his mind that the huge bird was one of the gallinaceous tribe.*

Rapid propagation of domestic quadrupeds over the American continent.—Next to the direct agency of man, his indirect influence in multiplying the numbers of large herbivorous quadrupeds of domesticated races may be regarded as one of the most obvious causes of the extermination of species. On this, and on several other grounds, the introduction of the horse, ox, and other mammalia, into America, and their rapid propagation over that continent within the three last centuries, is a fact of great importance in natural history. The extraordinary herds of wild cattle and horses which overran the plains of South America sprung from a very few pairs first carried over by the Spaniards; and they prove that the wide geographical range of large species in great continents does not necessarily imply that they have existed there from remote periods.

Humboldt observes, in his *Travels*, on the authority of Azzara, that it is believed there exist, in the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, twelve million cows and three million horses, without comprising, in this enumeration, the cattle that have no acknowledged proprietor. In the Llanos of Caracas, the rich hateros, or proprietors of pastoral farms, are entirely ignorant of the number of cattle they possess. The young are branded with a mark peculiar to each herd, and some of the most wealthy owners mark as many as fourteen thousand a year.† In the northern plains, from the Orinoco to the lake of Maracaybo, M. Depons reckoned that 1,200,000 oxen, 180,000 horses, and 90,000 mules, wandered at large.‡ In some parts of the valley of the Mississippi, especially in the country of the Osage Indians, wild horses are immensely numerous.

The establishment of black cattle in America dates from Columbus's second voyage to St. Domingo. They there multiplied rapidly: and that island presently became a kind of nursery from which these animals were successively transported to various parts of the continental coast, and from thence into the interior. Notwithstanding these numerous exportations, in twenty-seven years after the discovery of the island, herds of four thousand head, as we learn from Oviedo, were not uncommon, and there were even some that amounted to eight thousand. In 1587, the

* Sur quelques Ossemens, &c.—Ann. des Sci., tome xxi. p. 103. Sept. 1830.

† Pers. Nar., vol. iv.

‡ Quarterly Review, vol. xxi. p. 335.

number of hides exported from St. Domingo alone, according to Acosta's report, was 35,444; and in the same year there were exported 64,350 from the ports of New Spain. This was in the sixty-fifth year after the taking of Mexico, previous to which event the Spaniards, who came into that country, had not been able to engage in any thing else than war.*

Every one is aware that these animals are now established throughout the American continent, from Canada to Paraguay.

The ass has thriven very generally in the New World; and we learn from Ulloa, that in Quito they ran wild, and multiplied in amazing numbers, so as to become a nuisance. They grazed together in herds, and when attacked defended themselves with their mouths. If a horse happened to stray into the places where they fed, they all fell upon him, and did not cease biting and kicking till they left him dead.†

The first hogs were carried to America by Columbus, and established in the island of St. Domingo the year following its discovery, in November, 1493. In succeeding years they were introduced into other places where the Spaniards settled; and, in the space of half a century, they were found established in the New World, from the latitude of 25° north, to the 40th degree of south latitude. Sheep, also, and goats have multiplied enormously in the New World, as have also the cat and the rat; which last, as before stated, has been imported unintentionally in ships. The dogs introduced by man, which have at different periods become wild in America, hunted in packs, like the wolf and the jackal, destroying not only hogs, but the calves and foals of the wild cattle and horses.

Ulloa in his Voyage, and Buffon on the authority of old writers, relate a fact which illustrates very clearly the principle before explained, of the check which the increase of one animal necessarily offers to that of another. The Spaniards had introduced goats into the island of Juan Fernandez, where they became so prolific as to furnish the pirates who infested those seas with provisions. In order to cut off this resource from the buccaneers, a number of dogs were turned loose into the island; and so numerous did they become in their turn, that they destroyed the goats in every accessible part, after which the number of the wild dogs again decreased.‡

Increase of rein-deer imported into Iceland.—As an example of the rapidity with which a large tract may become peopled by the offspring of a single pair of quadrupeds, it may be mentioned that in the year 1773 thirteen rein-deer were exported from Norway, only three of which reached Iceland. These were turned loose into the mountains of Guldbringè Syssel, where they multiplied so greatly, in the course of forty years,

* Quarterly Review, vol. xxi. p. 335.

† Ulloa's Voyage. Wood's Zoog., vol. i. p. 9.

‡ Buffon, vol. v. p. 100. Ulloa's Voyage, vol. ii. p. 220.

that it was not uncommon to meet with herds, consisting of from forty to one hundred, in various districts.

The rein-deer, observes a modern writer, is in Lapland a loser by his connexion with man, but Iceland will be this creature's paradise. There is, in the interior, a tract which Sir G. Mackenzie computes at not less than forty thousand square miles, without a single human habitation, and almost entirely unknown to the natives themselves. There are no wolves; the Icelanders will keep out the bears; and the rein-deer, being almost unmolested by man, will have no enemy whatever, unless it has brought with it its own tormenting gadfly.*

Besides the quadrupeds before enumerated, our domestic fowls have also succeeded in the West Indies and America, where they have the common fowl, the goose, the duck, the peacock, the pigeon, and the guinea-fowl. As these were often taken suddenly from the temperate to very hot regions, they were not reared at first without much difficulty; but after a few generations, they became familiarized to the climate, which, in many cases, approached much nearer than that of Europe to the temperature of their original native countries.

The fact of so many millions of wild and tame individuals of our domestic species, almost all of them the largest quadrupeds and birds, having been propagated throughout the new continent within the short period that has elapsed since the discovery of America, while no appreciable improvement can have been made in the productive powers of that vast continent, affords abundant evidence of the extraordinary changes which accompany the diffusion and progressive advancement of the human race over the globe. That it should have remained for us to witness such mighty revolutions is a proof, even if there was no other evidence, that the entrance of man into the planet is, comparatively speaking, of extremely modern date, and that the effects of his agency are only beginning to be felt.

Population which the globe is capable of supporting.—A modern writer has estimated, that there are in America upwards of four million square miles of useful soil, each capable of supporting 200 persons; and nearly six million, each mile capable of supporting 490 persons.† If this conjecture be true, it will follow, as that author observes, that if the natural resources of America were fully developed, it would afford sustenance to five times as great a number of inhabitants as the entire mass of human beings existing at present upon the globe. The new continent, he thinks, though less than half the size of the old, contains an equal quantity of useful soil, and much more than an equal amount of productive power. Be this as it may, we may safely conclude that the amount of human popu-

* Travels in Iceland in 1810, p. 342.

† Maclaren, art. America, Encyc. Britannica.

lation now existing constitutes but a small proportion of that which the globe is capable of supporting, or which it is destined to sustain at no distant period, by the rapid progress of society, especially in America, Australia, and certain parts of the old continent.

Power of exterminating species no prerogative of man.—But if we reflect that many millions of square miles of the most fertile land, occupied originally by a boundless variety of animal and vegetable forms, have been already brought under the dominion of man, and compelled, in a great measure, to yield nourishment to him, and to a limited number of plants and animals which he has caused to increase, we must at once be convinced, that the annihilation of a multitude of species has already been effected, and will continue to go on hereafter, in certain regions, in a still more rapid ratio, as the colonies of highly civilized nations spread themselves over unoccupied lands.

Yet, if we wield the sword of extermination as we advance, we have no reason to repine at the havoc committed, nor to fancy, with the Scottish poet, that “we violate the social union of nature ;” or complain, with the melancholy Jaques, that we

Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,
To fright the animals and to kill them up
In their assigned and native dwelling-place.

We have only to reflect, that in thus obtaining possession of the earth by conquest, and defending our acquisitions by force, we exercise no exclusive prerogative. Every species which has spread itself from a small point over a wide area must, in like manner, have marked its progress by the diminution or the entire extirpation of some other, and must maintain its ground by a successful struggle against the encroachments of other plants and animals. That minute parasitic plant, called “the rust” in wheat, has, like the Hessian fly, the locust, and the aphis, caused famines ere now amongst the “lords of the creation.” The most insignificant and diminutive species, whether in the animal or vegetable kingdom, have each slaughtered their thousands, as they disseminated themselves over the globe, as well as the lion, when first it spread itself over the tropical regions of Africa.

Concluding remarks.—Although we have as yet considered one class only of the causes (the organic) by which species may become exterminated, yet it cannot but appear evident that the continued action of these alone, throughout myriads of future ages, must work an entire change in the state of the organic creation, not merely on the continents and islands, where the power of man is chiefly exerted, but in the great ocean, where his control is almost unknown. The mind is prepared by the contemplation of such future revolutions to look for the signs of others, of an analogous nature, in the monuments of the past. Instead of being astonished at the proofs there manifested of endless mutations in the animate world,

they will appear to one who has thought profoundly on the fluctuations now in progress, to afford evidence in favour of the uniformity of the system, unless, indeed, we are precluded from speaking of *uniformity* when we characterize a principle of endless variation.

CHAPTER X.

INFLUENCE OF INORGANIC CAUSES IN CHANGING THE HABITATIONS OF SPECIES.

Powers of diffusion indispensable, that each species may maintain its ground—How changes in the physical geography affect the distribution of species—Rate of the change of species due to this cause cannot be uniform (p. 81.)—Every change in the physical geography of large regions tends to the extinction of species (p. 85.)—Effects of a general alteration of climate on the migration of species—Gradual refrigeration would cause species in the northern and southern hemispheres to become distinct—elevation of temperature the reverse—Effects on the condition of species which must result from inorganic changes inconsistent with the theory of transmutation (p. 90.).

Powers of diffusion indispensable, that each species may maintain its ground.—HAVING shown in the last chapter how considerably the numerical increase or the extension of the geographical range of any one species must derange the numbers and distribution of others, let us now direct our attention to the influence which the inorganic causes described in the second book are continually exerting on the habitations of species.

So great is the instability of the earth's surface, that if nature were not continually engaged in the task of sowing seeds and colonizing animals, the depopulation of a certain portion of the habitable sea and land would in a few years be considerable. Whenever a river transports sediment into a lake or sea, so as materially to diminish its depth, the aquatic animals and plants which delight in deep water are expelled: the tract, however, is not allowed to remain useless, but is soon peopled by species which require more light and heat, and thrive where the water is shallow. Every addition made to the land by the encroachment of the delta of a river banishes many subaqueous species from their native abodes; but the new-formed plain is not permitted to lie unoccupied, being instantly covered with terrestrial vegetation. The ocean devours continuous lines of sea-coast, and precipitates forests or rich pasture land into the waves: but

this space is not lost to the animate creation ; for shells and sea-weed soon adhere to the new-made cliffs, and numerous fish people the channel which the current has scooped out for itself. No sooner has a volcanic island been thrown up than some lichens begin to grow upon it, and it is sometimes clothed with verdure, while smoke and ashes are still occasionally thrown from the crater. The cocoa, pandanus, and mangrove take root upon the coral reef before it has fairly risen above the waves. The burning stream of lava that descends from Etna rolls through the stately forest, and converts to ashes every tree and herb which stands in its way ; but the black strip of land thus desolated is covered again, in the course of time, with oaks, pines, and chestnuts, as luxuriant as those which the fiery torrent swept away.

Every flood and landslide, every wave which a hurricane or earthquake throws upon the shore, every shower of volcanic dust and ashes which buries a country far and wide to the depth of many feet, every advance of the sand-flood, every conversion of salt-water into fresh when rivers alter their main channel of discharge, every permanent variation in the rise or fall of tides in an estuary—these and countless other causes displace, in the course of a few centuries, certain plants and animals from stations which they previously occupied. If, therefore, the Author of nature had not been prodigal of those numerous contrivances, before alluded to, for spreading all classes of organic beings over the earth—if he had not ordained that the fluctuations of the animate and inanimate creation should be in perfect harmony with each other, it is evident that considerable spaces, now the most habitable on the globe, would soon be as devoid of life as are the Alpine snows, or the dark abysses of the ocean, or the moving sands of the Sahara.

The powers then of migration and diffusion conferred on animals and plants are indispensable to enable them to maintain their ground, and would be necessary even though it were never intended that a species should gradually extend its geographical range. But a facility of shifting their quarters being once given, it cannot fail to happen that the inhabitants of one province should occasionally penetrate into some other, since the strongest of those barriers which I before described as separating distinct regions are all liable to be thrown down, one after the other, during the vicissitudes of the earth's surface.

How changes in physical geography affect the distribution of species.—The numbers and distribution of particular species are affected in two ways, by changes in the physical geography of the earth :—First, these changes promote or retard the migrations of species ; secondly, they alter the physical conditions of the localities which species inhabit. If the ocean should gradually wear its way through an isthmus, like that of Suez, it would open a passage for the intermixture of the aquatic tribes of two seas previously disjoined, and would, at the same time, close a free

communication which the terrestrial plants and animals of two continents had before enjoyed. These would be, perhaps, the most important consequences, in regard to the distribution of species, which would result from the breach made by the sea in such a spot; but there would be others of a distinct nature, such as the conversion of a certain tract of land which formed the isthmus into sea. This space, previously occupied by terrestrial plants and animals, would be immediately delivered over to the aquatic; a local revolution which might have happened in innumerable other parts of the globe, without being attended by any alteration in the blending together of species of two distinct provinces.

Rate of change of species cannot be uniform.—This observation leads me to point out one of the most interesting conclusions to which we are led by the contemplation of the vicissitudes of the inanimate world in relation to those of the animate. It is clear that, if the agency of inorganic causes be uniform, as I have supposed, they must operate very irregularly on the state of organic beings, so that the rate according to which these will change in particular regions will not be equal in equal periods of time.

I am not about to advocate the doctrine of general catastrophes recurring at certain intervals, as in the ancient Oriental cosmogonies, nor do I doubt that, if very considerable periods of equal duration could be compared one with another, the rate of change in the living, as well as in the inorganic world, might be nearly uniform; but if we regard each of the causes separately, which we know to be at present the most instrumental in remodelling the state of the surface, we shall find that we must expect each to be in action for thousands of years, without producing any extensive alterations in the habitable surface, and then to give rise, during a very brief period, to important revolutions.

Illustration derived from subsidences.—I shall illustrate this principle by a few of the most remarkable examples which present themselves. In the course of the last century, as we have seen, a considerable number of instances are recorded of the solid surface, whether covered by water or not, having been permanently sunk or upraised by subterranean movements. Most of these convulsions are only accompanied by temporary fluctuations in the state of limited districts, and a continued repetition of these events for thousands of years might not produce any decided change in the state of many of those great zoological or botanical provinces of which I have sketched the boundaries.

When, for example, large parts of the ocean and even of inland seas are a thousand fathoms or upwards in depth, it is a matter of no moment to the animate creation that vast tracts should be heaved up many fathoms at certain intervals, or should subside to the same amount. Neither can any material revolution be produced in South America either in the terrestrial or the marine plants or animals by a series of shocks on the coast

of Chili, each of which, like that of Penco, in 1750, should uplift the coast about twenty-five feet. Nor if the ground sinks fifty feet at a time, as in the harbour of Port Royal, in Jamaica, in 1692, will such alterations of level work any general fluctuations in the state of organic beings inhabiting the West India islands, or the Caribbean Sea.

It is only when these subterranean powers, by shifting gradually the points where their principal force is developed, happen to strike upon some particular region where a slight change of level immediately affects the distribution of land and water, or the state of the climate, or the barriers between distinct groups of species over extensive areas, that the rate of fluctuation becomes accelerated, and may, in the course of a few years or centuries, work mightier changes than had been experienced in myriads of antecedent years.

Thus, for example, a repetition of subsidences causing the narrow isthmus of Panama to sink down a few hundred feet, would, in a few centuries, bring about a great revolution in the state of the animate creation in the western hemisphere. Thousands of aquatic species would pass, for the first time from the Caribbean Sea into the Pacific; and thousands of others, before peculiar to the Pacific Ocean, would make their way into the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. A considerable modification would probably be occasioned by the same event in the direction or volume of the Gulf stream, and thereby the temperature of the sea and the contiguous lands might be altered as far as the influence of that current extends. A change of climate might thus be produced in the ocean from Florida to Spitzbergen, and in many countries in North America, Europe, and Greenland. Not merely the heat, but the quantity of rain which falls, would be altered in certain districts, so that many species would be excluded from tracts where they before flourished; others would be reduced in number; and some would thrive more and multiply. The seeds also and the fruits of plants would no longer be drifted in precisely the same directions, nor the eggs of aquatic animals; neither would species be any longer impeded in their migrations towards particular stations before shut out from them by their inability to cross the mighty current.

Let us take another example from a part of the globe which is at present liable to suffer by earthquakes, namely, the low sandy tract which intervenes between the Sea of Azof and the Caspian. If there should occur a sinking down to a trifling amount, and such ravines should be formed as might be produced by a few earthquakes, not more considerable than have fallen within our limited observation during the last 140 years, the waters of the Sea of Azof would pour rapidly into the Caspian, which, according to the levellings of the Russian travellers Engelhardt and Parrot, is about 350 feet below the level of the Black Sea.* The Sea of

* *Reise in den Kaukasus*. This opinion of a great difference of level was first

Azof would immediately borrow from the Black Sea, that sea again from the Mediterranean, and the Mediterranean again from the Atlantic, so that an inexhaustible current would pour down into the low tracts of Asia bordering on the Caspian, by which all the sandy salt steppes adjacent to that sea would be inundated. An area of at least eighteen thousand square leagues, now below the level of the Mediterranean, would be converted from land into sea.

The diluvial waters would reach the salt lake of Aral, nor stop until their eastern shores were bounded by the high land which in the steppe of the Kirghis connects the Altay with the Himalaya Mountains. Saratof, Orenburg, and the low regions of the Oxus and Jaxartes, would be submerged. A few years, perhaps a few months, might suffice for the accomplishment of this great revolution in the geography of the interior of Asia; and it is impossible for those who believe in the permanence of the energy with which existing causes now act, not to anticipate analogous events again and again in the course of future ages.

Illustration derived from the elevation of land.—Let us next imagine a few cases of the elevation of land of small extent at certain critical points, as, for example, in the shallowest parts of the Straits of Gibraltar, where the soundings from the African to the European side give only 220 fathoms. In proportion as this submarine barrier of rock was upheaved, to effect which would merely require the shocks of partial and confined earthquakes, the volume of water which pours in from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean would be lessened. But the loss of the inland sea by evaporation would remain the same; so that being no longer able to draw on the ocean for a supply sufficient to restore its equilibrium, it must sink, and leave dry a certain portion of land around its borders. The current which now flows constantly out of the Black Sea into the Mediterranean would then rush in more rapidly, and the level of the Mediterranean would be thereby prevented from falling so low; but the level of the Black Sea would, for the same reason, sink; so that when, by a continued series of elevatory movements, the Straits of Gibraltar had become completely closed up, we might expect large and level sandy steppes to surround both the Black Sea and Mediterranean, like those occurring at present on the skirts of the Caspian, and the Lake of Aral. The geographical range of hundreds of aquatic species would be thereby circumscribed, and that of hundreds of terrestrial plants and animals extended.

A line of submarine volcanos crossing the channel of some strait, and

promulgated in 1811, and afterwards entirely retracted by Professor Parrot in his "Travels to Mount Ararat," after he had revisited the Caspian in 1829-30. But the matter is still in doubt; for Mr. Erman, of Berlin, in his "Reise um die Erde, &c.," 1828-29-30, infers from independent observations that the Caspian is lower by 42.8 toises, or about 280 feet, than the Black Sea. See Book IV. ch. xix., note on Parrot.

gradually choking it up with ashes and lava, might produce a new barrier as effectually as a series of earthquakes; especially if thermal springs, charged with carbonate of lime, silica, and other mineral ingredients, should promote the rapid multiplication of corals and shells, and cement them together with solid matter precipitated during the intervals between eruptions. Suppose in this manner a stoppage to be caused of the Bahama channel between the bank of that name and the coast of Florida. This insignificant revolution, confined to a mere spot in the bottom of the ocean, would, by diverting the main current of the Gulf stream, give rise to extensive changes in the climate and distribution of animals and plants inhabiting the northern hemisphere.

Illustration from the formation of new islands.—A repetition of elevatory movements of earthquakes might continue over an area as extensive as Europe, for thousands of ages, at the bottom of the ocean, in certain regions, and produce no visible effects; whereas, if they should operate in some shallow parts of the Pacific, amid the coral archipelagos, they would soon give birth to a new continent. Hundreds of volcanic islands may be thrown up, and become covered with vegetation, without causing more than local fluctuations in the animate world; but if a chain like the Aleutian archipelago, or the Kurile Isles, run for a distance of many hundred miles, so as to form an almost uninterrupted communication between two continents, or two distant islands, the migrations of plants, birds, insects, and even of some quadrupeds, may cause, in a short time, an extraordinary series of revolutions tending to augment the range of some animals and plants, and to limit that of others. A new archipelago might be formed in the Mediterranean, the Bay of Biscay, and a thousand other places, and might produce less important events than one rock which should rise up between Australia and Java, so placed that winds and currents might cause an interchange of the plants, insects, and birds.

From the wearing through of an isthmus.—If we turn from the igneous to the aqueous agents, we find the same tendency to an irregular rate of change, naturally connected with the strictest uniformity in the energy of those causes. When the sea, for example, gradually encroaches upon both sides of a narrow isthmus, as that of Sleswick, separating the North Sea from the Baltic, where, as before stated, the cliffs on both the opposite coasts are wasting away,* no material alteration results for thousands of years, save only that there is a progressive conversion of a small strip of land into water. A few feet only, or a few yards, are annually removed; but when, at last, the partition shall be broken down, and the tides of the ocean shall enter by a direct passage into the inland sea, instead of going by a circuitous route through the Cattegat, a body of salt water will sweep

* See Vol. I. p. 273.

up as far as the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland, the waters of which are now brackish, or almost fresh; and this revolution will be attended by the local annihilation of many species.

Similar consequences must have resulted, on a small scale, when the sea opened its way through the isthmus of Staveren in the thirteenth century, forming a union between an inland lake and the ocean, and opening, in the course of one century, a shallow strait, more than half as wide as the narrowest part of that which divides England from France.

Changes in physical geography which must occasion extinction of species.—It will almost seem superfluous, after I have thus traced the important modifications in the condition of living beings which flow from changes of trifling extent, to argue that entire revolutions might be brought about, if the climate and physical geography of the whole globe were greatly altered. It has been stated, that species are in general local, some being confined to extremely small spots, and depending for their existence on a combination of causes, which, if they are to be met with elsewhere, occur only in some very remote region. Hence it must happen that, when the nature of these localities is changed, the species will perish; for it will rarely happen that the cause which alters the character of the district will afford new facilities to the species to establish itself elsewhere.

African desert.—If we attribute the origin of a great part of the desert of Africa to the gradual progress of moving sands, driven eastward by the westerly winds, we may safely infer that a variety of species must have been annihilated by this cause alone. The sand-flood has been inundating, from time immemorial, the rich lands on the west of the Nile; and we have only to multiply this effect a sufficient number of times, in order to understand how, in the lapse of ages, a whole group of terrestrial animals and plants may become extinct.

This desert, without including Bornou and Darfour, extends, according to the calculation of Humboldt, over 194,000 square leagues; an area nearly three times as great as that of France. In a small portion of so vast a space, we may infer from analogy that there were many peculiar species of plants and animals which must have been banished by the sand, and their habitations invaded by the camel, and by birds and insects formed for the arid sands.

There is evidently nothing in the nature of the catastrophe to favour the escape of the former inhabitants to some adjoining province; nothing to weaken, in the bordering lands, that powerful barrier against emigration—pre-occupancy. Nor, even if the exclusion of a certain group of species from a given tract were compensated by an extension of their range over a new country, would that circumstance tend to the conservation of species in general; for the extirpation would merely then be transferred to the region so invaded. If it be imagined, for example, that

the aboriginal quadrupeds, birds, and other animals of Africa, emigrated in consequence of the advance of drift-sand, and colonized Arabia, the indigenous Arabian species must have given way before them, and have been reduced in number or destroyed.

Let us next suppose that, in some central and more elevated parts of the great African desert, the upheaving power of subterranean movements should be exerted throughout an immense series of ages, accompanied, at certain intervals, by volcanic eruptions, such as gave rise at once, in 1755, to a mountain 1600 feet high, on the Mexican plateau. When the continued repetition of these events had caused a mountain-chain, it is obvious that a complete transformation in the state of the climate would be brought about throughout a vast area.

We may imagine the summits of the new chain to rise so high as to be covered, like Mount Atlas, for several thousand feet, with snow, during a great part of the year. The melting of these snows, during the greatest heat, would cause the rivers to swell in the season when the greatest drought now prevails; the waters, moreover, derived from this source, would always be of lower temperature than the surrounding atmosphere, and would thus contribute to cool the climate. During the numerous earthquakes and volcanic eruptions supposed to accompany the gradual formation of the chain, there would be many floods caused by the bursting of temporary lakes, and by the melting of snows by lava. These inundations might deposit alluvial matter far and wide over the original sands, as the country assumed varied shapes, and was modified again and again by the moving power from below, and the aqueous erosion of the surface above. At length the Sahara might be fertilized, irrigated by rivers and streamlets intersecting it in every direction, and covered by jungle and morasses; so that the animals and plants which now people Northern Africa would disappear, and the region would gradually become fitted for the reception of a population of species perfectly dissimilar in their forms, habits, and organization.

There are always some peculiar and characteristic features in the physical geography of each large division of the globe; and on these peculiarities the state of animal and vegetable life is dependent. If, therefore, we admit incessant fluctuations in the physical geography, we must, at the same time, concede the successive extinction of terrestrial and aquatic species to be part of the economy of our system. When some great class of *stations* is in excess in certain latitudes, as, for example, in wide savannahs, arid sands, lofty mountains, or inland seas, we find a corresponding development of species adapted for such circumstances. In North America, where there is a chain of vast inland lakes of fresh water, we find an extraordinary abundance and variety of aquatic birds, fresh-water fish, testacea, and small amphibious reptiles, fitted for such a climate. The greater part of these would perish if the lakes were destroyed,—an

event that might be brought about by some of the least of those important revolutions contemplated in geology. It might happen that no fresh-water lakes of corresponding magnitude might then exist on the globe ; or that, if they occurred elsewhere, they might be situated in New Holland, Southern Africa, Eastern Asia, or some region so distant as to be quite inaccessible to the North American species ; or they might be situated within the tropics, in a climate uninhabitable by species fitted for a temperate zone ; or, finally, we may presume that they would be pre-occupied by *indigenous* tribes.

To pursue this train of reasoning farther is unnecessary ; the geologist has only to reflect on what has been said of the habitations and stations of organic beings in general, and to consider them in relation to those effects which were contemplated in the second book, as resulting from the igneous and aqueous causes now in action, and he will immediately perceive that, amidst the vicissitudes of the earth's surface, species cannot be immortal, but must perish, one after the other, like the individuals which compose them. There is no possibility of escaping from this conclusion, without resorting to some hypothesis as violent as that of Lamarck, who imagined, as we have before seen, that species are each of them endowed with indefinite powers of modifying their organization, in conformity to the endless changes of circumstances to which they are exposed.

Effects of a general Alteration in Climate on the Distribution of Species.

Some of the effects which must attend every general alteration of *climate* are sufficiently peculiar to claim a separate consideration before concluding the present chapter.

I have before stated that, during seasons of extraordinary severity, many northern birds, and in some countries many quadrupeds, migrate southwards. If these cold seasons were to become frequent, in consequence of a gradual and general refrigeration of the atmosphere, such migrations would be more and more regular, until, at length, many animals, now confined to the arctic regions, would become the tenants of the temperate zone ; while the inhabitants of the temperate zone would approach nearer to the equator. At the same time, many species previously established on high mountains would begin to descend, in every latitude, towards the middle regions ; and those which were confined to the flanks of mountains would make their way into the plains. Analogous changes would also take place in the vegetable kingdom.

If, on the contrary, the heat of the atmosphere be on the increase, the plants and animals of low grounds would ascend to higher levels, the equatorial species would migrate into the temperate zone, and those of the temperate into the arctic circle.

But although some species might thus be preserved, every great change of climate must be fatal to many which can find no place of retreat when their original habitations become unfit for them. For if the general temperature be on the rise, then there is no cooler region whither the polar species can take refuge; if it be on the decline, then the animals and plants previously established between the tropics have no resource. Suppose the general heat of the atmosphere to increase, so that even the arctic region became too warm for the musk-ox and rein-deer, it is clear that they must perish; so if the torrid zone should lose so much of its heat by the progressive refrigeration of the earth's surface as to be an unfit habitation for apes, boas, bamboos, and palms, these tribes of animals and plants, or, at least, most of the species now belonging to them, would become extinct, for there would be no warmer latitudes for their reception.

It will follow, therefore, that as often as the climates of the globe are passing from the extreme of heat to that of cold—from the summer to the winter of the great year before alluded to*—the migratory movement will be directed constantly from the poles towards the equator; and for this reason the species inhabiting parallel latitudes, in the northern and southern hemispheres, must become widely different. For I assume, on grounds before explained, that the original stock of each species is introduced into one spot of the earth only, and, consequently, no species can be at once indigenous in the arctic and antarctic circles.†

But when, on the contrary, a series of changes in the physical geography of the globe, or any other supposed cause, occasions an elevation of the general temperature,—when there is a passage from the winter to one of the vernal or summer seasons of the great cycle of climates,—then the order of the migratory movement is inverted. The different species of animals and plants direct their course from the equator towards the poles; and the northern and southern hemispheres may become peopled to a great degree, by identical species. Such is not the actual state of the inhabited earth, as I have already shown in my sketch of the geographical distribution of its living productions; and this fact adds an additional proof to the geological evidence, derived from independent sources, that the general temperature has been cooling down during the epochs which immediately preceded our own.

I do not mean to speculate on the entire transposition of a group of animals and plants from tropical to polar latitudes, or the reverse as a probable, or even possible, event; for although we may believe the mean annual temperature of one zone to be transferable to another, we know that the same climate cannot be so transferred. Whatever be the general

* Book I. chap. vii.

† Chap. viii.

temperature of the earth's surface, comparative equability of heat will characterize the tropical regions; while great periodical variations will belong to the temperate, and still more to the polar, latitudes. These, and many other peculiarities connected with heat and light, depend on fixed astronomical causes, such as the motion of the earth and its position in relation to the sun, and not on those fluctuations of its surface, which may influence the general temperature.

Among many obstacles to such extensive transference of habitations we must not forget the immense lapse of time required, according to the hypothesis before suggested, to bring about a considerable change in climate. During a period so vast, the other causes of extirpation, before enumerated, would exert so powerful an influence as to prevent all, save a very few hardy species, from passing from equatorial to polar regions, or from the tropics to the pole.*

But the power of accommodation to new circumstances is great in certain species, and might enable many to pass from one zone to another, if the mean annual heat of the atmosphere and the ocean were greatly altered. To the marine tribes, especially, such a passage would be possible; for they are less impeded in their migrations by barriers of land, than are the terrestrial by the ocean. Add to this, that the temperature of the ocean is much more uniform than that of the atmosphere investing the land; so that we may easily suppose that most of the testacea, fish, and other classes, might pass from the equatorial into the temperate regions, if the mean temperature of those regions were transposed, although a second expatriation of these species of tropical origin into the arctic and antarctic circles would probably be impossible.

On the principles above explained, if we found that at some former period, as when, for example, our carboniferous strata were deposited, the same tree-ferns and other plants inhabited the regions now occupied by Europe and Van Diemen's Land, we should suspect that the species in question had, at some antecedent period, inhabited lands within the tropics, and that an increase of the mean annual heat had caused them to emigrate into both the temperate zones. There are no geological data, however, as yet obtained, to warrant the opinion that such identity of species existed in the two hemispheres in the era in question.

Let us now consider more particularly the effect of vicissitudes of climate in causing one species to give way before the increasing numbers of some other.

When temperature forms the barrier which arrests the progress of an animal or plant in a particular direction, the individuals are fewer and less vigorous as they approach the extreme confines of the geographical range of the species. But these stragglers are ready to multiply rapidly

* See Book I. chap. vi. vii. and viii.

on the slightest increase or diminution of heat that may be favourable to them, just as particular insects increase during a hot summer, and certain plants and animals gain ground after a series of congenial seasons.

In almost every district, especially if it be mountainous, there are a variety of species the limits of whose habitations are conterminous, some being unable to proceed farther without encountering too much heat, others too much cold. Individuals, which are thus on the borders of the regions proper to their respective species, are like the outposts of hostile armies, ready to profit by every slight change of circumstances in their favour, and to advance upon the ground occupied by their neighbours and opponents.

The proximity of distinct climates, produced by the inequalities of the earth's surface, brings species possessing very different constitutions into such immediate contact, that their naturalizations are very speedy whenever opportunities of advancing present themselves. Many insects and plants, for example, are common to low plains within the arctic circle, and to lofty mountains in Scotland and other parts of Europe. If the climate, therefore, of the polar regions were transferred to our own latitudes, the species in question would immediately descend from these elevated stations to overrun the low grounds. Invasions of this kind, attended by the expulsion of the pre-occupants, are almost instantaneous, because the change of temperature not only places the one species in a more favourable position, but renders the others sickly and almost incapable of defence.

These changes inconsistent with the theory of transmutation.—Lamarck, when speculating on the transmutation of species, supposed every modification in organization and instinct to be brought about slowly and insensibly in an indefinite lapse of ages. But he does not appear to have sufficiently considered how much every alteration in the physical condition of the habitable surface changes the relations of a great number of co-existing species, and that some of these would be ready instantly to avail themselves of the slightest change in their favour, and to multiply to the injury of others. Even if we thought it possible that the palm or the elephant, which now flourish in equatorial regions, could ever learn to bear the variable seasons of our temperate zone, or the rigours of an arctic winter, we might, with no less confidence, affirm, that they must perish before they had time to become habituated to such new circumstances. That they would be displaced by other species as often as the climate varied, may be inferred from the data before explained respecting the local extermination of species produced by the multiplication of others.

Suppose the climate of the highest part of the woody zone of Etna to be transferred to the sea-shore at the base of the mountain, no botanist would anticipate that the olive, lemon-tree and prickly pear (*Cactus opuntia*), would be able to contend with the oak and chestnut, which would

begin forthwith to descend to a lower level; or that these last would be able to stand their ground against the pine, which would also, in the space of a few years, begin to occupy a lower position. We might form some kind of estimate of the time which might be required for the migrations of these plants; whereas we have no data for concluding that any number of thousands of years would be sufficient for one step in the pretended metamorphosis of one species into another, possessing distinct attributes and qualities.

This argument is applicable not merely to *climate*, but to any other cause of mutation. However slowly a lake may be converted into a marsh, or a marsh into a meadow, it is evident that before the lacustrine plants can acquire the power of living in marshes, or the marsh plants of living in a less humid soil, other species, already existing in the region, and fitted for these several stations, will intrude and keep possession of the ground. So, if a tract of salt water becomes fresh by passing through every intermediate degree of brackishness, still the marine mollusks will never be permitted to be gradually metamorphosed into fluviatile species; because long before any such transformation can take place by slow and insensible degrees, other tribes, already formed to delight in brackish or fresh water, will avail themselves of the change in the fluid, and will, each in their turn, monopolize the space.

It is idle, therefore, to dispute about the abstract possibility of the conversion of one species into another, when there are known causes so much more active in their nature, which must always intervene and prevent the actual accomplishment of such conversions. A faint image of the certain doom of a species less fitted to struggle with some new condition in a region which it previously inhabited, and where it has to contend with a more vigorous species, is presented by the extirpation of savage tribes of men by the advancing colony of some civilized nation. In this case the contest is merely between two different *races*—two varieties, moreover, of a species which exceeds all others in its aptitude to accommodate its habits to the most extraordinary variations of circumstances. Yet few future events are more certain than the speedy extermination of the Indians of North America and the savages of New Holland in the course of a few centuries, when these tribes will be remembered only in poetry and tradition.

CHAPTER XI.

EXTINCTION AND CREATION OF SPECIES.

Theory of the successive extinction of species consistent with their limited geographical distribution—Opinions of botanists respecting the centres from which plants have been diffused—Whether there are grounds for inferring that the loss, from time to time, of certain animals and plants, is compensated by the introduction of new species?—Whether any evidence of such new creations could be expected within the historical era? (p. 95.)—The question whether the existing species have been created in succession must be decided by geological monuments.

Successive Extinction of Species consistent with their limited Geographical Distribution.

IN the preceding chapters I have pointed out the strict dependence of each species of animal and plant on certain physical conditions in the state of the earth's surface, and on the number and attributes of other organic beings inhabiting the same region. I have also endeavoured to show that all these conditions are in a state of continual fluctuation, the igneous and aqueous agents remodelling, from time to time, the physical geography of the globe, and the migrations of species causing new relations to spring up successively between different organic beings. I have deduced as a corollary, that the species existing at any particular period must, in the course of ages, become extinct one after the other. "They must die out," to borrow an emphatical expression from Buffon, "because 'Time fights against them.'"

If the views which I have taken are just, there will be no difficulty in explaining why the habitations of so many species are now restrained within exceedingly narrow limits. Every local revolution, such as those contemplated in the preceding chapter, tends to circumscribe the range of some species, while it enlarges that of others; and if we are led to infer that new species originate in one spot only, each must require time to diffuse itself over a wide area. It will follow, therefore, from the adoption of this hypothesis, that the recent origin of some species, and the high antiquity of others, are equally consistent with the general fact of their limited distribution, some being local, because they have not existed long enough to admit of their wide dissemination; others, because circumstances in the animate or inanimate world have occurred to restrict the range which they may once have obtained.

As considerable modifications in the relative levels of land and sea have taken place in certain regions since the existing species were in being, we can feel no surprise that the zoologist and botanist have hitherto found it

difficult to refer the geographical distribution of species to any clear and determinate principles, since they have usually speculated on the phenomena, upon the assumption that the physical geography of the globe had undergone no material alteration since the introduction of the species now living. So long as this assumption was made, the facts relating to the geography of plants and animals appeared capricious in the extreme, and by many the subject was pronounced to be so full of mystery and anomalies, that the establishment of a satisfactory theory was hopeless.

Centres from which plants have been diffused.—Some botanists conceived, in accordance with the hypothesis of Willdenow, that mountains were the centres of creation from which the plants now inhabiting large continents have radiated; to which De Candolle and others, with much reason, objected, that mountains, on the contrary, are often the barriers between two provinces of distinct vegetation. The geologist who is acquainted with the extensive modifications which the surface of the earth has undergone in very recent geological epochs, may be able, perhaps, to reconcile both these theories in their application to different regions.

A lofty range of mountains, which is so ancient as to date from a period when the species of animals and plants differed from those now living, will naturally form a barrier between contiguous provinces; but a chain which has been raised, in great part, within the epoch of existing species, and around which new lands have arisen from the sea within that period, will be a centre of peculiar vegetation.

“In France,” observes De Candolle, “the Alps and Cevennes prevent a great number of the plants of the south from spreading themselves to the northward; but it has been remarked that some species have made their way through the gorges of these chains, and are found on their northern sides, principally in those places where they are lower and more interrupted.”* Now the chains here alluded to have probably been of considerable height ever since the era when the existing vegetation began to appear, and were it not for the deep fissures which divide them, they might have caused much more abrupt terminations to the extension of distinct assemblages of species.

Parts of the Italian peninsula, on the other hand, have gained a considerable portion of their present height, since a majority of the marine species now inhabiting the Mediterranean, and probably, also, since the terrestrial plants of the same region were in being. Large tracts of land have been added, both on the Adriatic and Mediterranean side, to what originally constituted a much narrower range of mountains, if not a chain of islands running nearly north and south, like Corsica and Sardinia. It may therefore be presumed that the Apennines have been a centre whence species have diffused themselves over the contiguous *lower* and *newer* regions. In this and all analogous situations, the doctrine of Willdenow,

* Essai Elémentaire, &c., p. 46.

that species have radiated from the mountains as from centres, may be well founded.

Introduction of New Species.

If the reader should infer, from the facts laid before him in the preceding chapters, that the successive extinction of animals and plants may be part of the constant and regular course of nature, he will naturally inquire whether there are any means provided for the repair of these losses? Is it part of the economy of our system that the habitable globe should, to a certain extent, become depopulated both in the ocean and on the land; or that the variety of species should diminish until some new era arrives when a new and extraordinary effort of creative energy is to be displayed? Or is it possible that new species can be called into being from time to time, and yet that so astonishing a phenomenon can escape the observation of naturalists?

Humboldt has characterized these subjects as among the mysteries which natural science cannot reach; and he observes that the investigation of the origin of beings does not belong to zoological or botanical geography. To geology, however, these topics do strictly appertain; and this science is chiefly interested in inquiries into the state of the animate creation as it now exists, with a view of pointing out its relations to antecedent periods when its condition was different.

Before offering any hypothesis towards the solution of so difficult a problem, let us consider what kind of evidence we ought to expect, in the present state of science, of the first appearance of new animals or plants, if we could imagine the successive creation of species to constitute, like their gradual extinction, a regular part of the economy of nature.

In the first place, it is obviously more easy to prove that a species, once numerously represented in a given district, has ceased to be, than that some other which did not pre-exist has made its appearance—assuming always, for reasons before stated, that single stocks only of each animal and plant are originally created, and that individuals of new species do not suddenly start up in many different places at once.

So imperfect has the science of natural history remained down to our own times, that, within the memory of persons now living, the numbers of known animals and plants have been doubled, or even quadrupled, in many classes. New and often conspicuous species are annually discovered in parts of the old continent, long inhabited by the most civilized nations. Conscious, therefore, of the limited extent of our information, we always infer, when such discoveries are made, that the beings in question had previously eluded our research; or had at least existed elsewhere, and only migrated at a recent period into the territories where we now find them. It is difficult, even in contemplation, to anticipate the time when we shall be entitled to make any other hypothesis in regard to all

the marine tribes, and to by far the greater number of the terrestrial ;—such as birds, which possess such unlimited powers of migration ; insects which, besides their numbers, are also so capable of being diffused to vast distances ; and cryptogamous plants, to which, as to many other classes, both of the animal and vegetable kingdom, similar observations are applicable.

What kind of evidence of new creations could be expected?—What kind of proofs, therefore, could we reasonably expect to find of the origin at a particular period of a new species ?

Perhaps it may be said in reply that, within the last two or three centuries, some forest tree or new quadruped might have been observed to appear suddenly in those parts of England or France which had been most thoroughly investigated ;—that naturalists might have been able to show that no such living being inhabited any other region of the globe, and that there was no tradition of any thing similar having before been observed in the district where it had made its appearance.

Now, although this objection may seem plausible, yet its force will be found to depend entirely on the rate of fluctuation which we suppose to prevail in the animate world, and on the proportion which such conspicuous subjects of the animal and vegetable kingdoms bear to those which are less known and escape our observation. There are perhaps more than a million species of plants and animals, exclusive of the microscopic and infusory animalcules, now inhabiting the terraqueous globe. The terrestrial plants may amount, says De Candolle, to somewhere between 110,000 and 120,000 ;* but the data on which this conjecture is founded are considered by many botanists to be vague and unsatisfactory. Sprengel only enumerated, in 1827, about 31,000 known phænogamous, and 6000 cryptogamous plants ; but that naturalist omitted many, perhaps 7000 phænogamous, and 1000 cryptogamous species. Mr. Lindley is of opinion that it would be rash, in the present state of science, to speculate on the existence of more than 80,000 phænogamous, and 10,000 cryptogamous plants. “ If we take,” he says, in a letter to the author on this subject, “ 37,000 as the number of published phænogamous species, and then add, for the undiscovered species in Asia and New Holland 15,000, in Africa 10,000, and in America 18,000, we have 80,000 species ; and if 7000 be the number of published cryptogamous plants, and we allow 3000 for the undiscovered species (making 10,000), there would then be, on the whole, 90,000 species.”

It was supposed by Linnæus that there were four or five species of insects in the world for each phænogamous plant : but if we may judge from the relative proportion of the two classes in Great Britain, the number of insects must be still greater ; for the total number of British insects,

* Géog. des Plantes. Dict. des Sci.

"according to the last census," is about 12,500,* whereas there are only 1500 phænogamous plants indigenous to our island. As the insects are much more numerous in hot countries than in our temperate latitudes, it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that there are more than half a million species in the world.

The number of known mammifers, according to Temminck, exceeds 800, and Baron Cuvier estimated the amount of known fishes at 6000. Nearly 6000 species of birds have likewise been ascertained.† We have still to add the reptiles, and all the invertebrated animals, exclusive of insects. It remains, in a great degree, mere matter of conjecture what proportion the aquatic tribes may bear to the denizens of the land; but the habitable surface beneath the waters can hardly be estimated at less than double that of the continents and islands, even admitting that a very considerable area is destitute of life, in consequence of great depth, cold, darkness, and other circumstances. In the late polar expedition it was found that, in some regions, as in Baffin's Bay, there were marine animals inhabiting the bottom at great depths, where the temperature of the water was below the freezing point. That there is life at much greater profundities in warmer regions, may be confidently inferred. I have before stated that marine plants not only exist, but acquire vivid colours at depths where, to our senses, there would be darkness deep as night.

The ocean teems with life—the class of *polyps* alone are conjectured by Lamarck to be as strong in individuals as insects. Every tropical reef is described as covered with corals and sponges, and swarming with crustacea, echini, and testacea; while almost every tide-washed rock in the world is carpeted with fuci, and supports some corallines, actiniæ, and mollusca. There are innumerable forms in the seas of the warmer zones, which have scarcely begun to attract the attention of the naturalist; and there are parasitic animals without number, three or four of which are sometimes appropriated to one genus, as to the *Balæna*, for example. Even though we concede, therefore, that the geographical range of marine species is more extensive in general than that of the terrestrial (the temperature of the sea being more uniform, and the land impeding less the migrations of the oceanic than the ocean those of the terrestrial species), yet it seems probable that the aquatic tribes far exceed in number the inhabitants of the land.

Without insisting on this point, it may be safe to assume, that, exclusive of microscopic beings, there are between one and two millions of species now inhabiting the terraqueous globe; so that if only one of these were to become extinct annually, and one new one were to be every year called into being, much more than a million of years might be required to bring about a complete revolution in organic life.

* See Catalogue of Brit. Insects, by John Curtis, Esq.

† See Quarterly Review, No. xciv. p. 337.

I am not hazarding at present any hypothesis as to the probable rate of change ; but none will deny that, when the *annual* birth and the *annual* death of one species on the globe is proposed as a mere speculation, this at least is to imagine no slight degree of instability in the animal creation. If we divide the surface of the earth into twenty regions of equal area, one of these might comprehend a space of land and water about equal in dimensions to Europe, and might contain a twentieth part of the million of species which may be assumed to exist in the animal kingdom. In this region one species only would, according to the rate of mortality before assumed, perish in twenty years, or only five out of fifty thousand in the course of a century. But as a considerable proportion of the whole would belong to the aquatic classes, with which we have a very imperfect acquaintance, we must exclude them from our consideration ; and if they constitute half of the entire number, then one species only might be lost in forty years among the terrestrial tribes. Now the mammalia, whether terrestrial or aquatic, bear so small a proportion to other classes of animals, forming less, perhaps, than one thousandth part of the whole, that, if the longevity of species in the different orders were equal, a vast period must elapse before it would come to the turn of this conspicuous class to lose one of their number. If one species only of the whole animal kingdom died out in forty years, no more than one mammifer might disappear in 40,000 years, in a region of the dimensions of Europe.

It is easy, therefore, to see, that, in a small portion of such an area, in countries, for example, of the size of England and France, periods of much greater duration must elapse before it would be possible to authenticate the first appearance of one of the larger plants and animals, assuming the annual birth and death of one species to be the rate of vicissitude in the animate creation throughout the world.

The observations of naturalists, upon living species, may, in the course of future centuries, accumulate positive data, from which an insight into the laws which govern this part of our terrestrial system may be derived ; but, in the present deficiency of historical records, we have traced up the subject to that point where geological monuments alone are capable of leading us on to the discovery of ulterior truths. To these, therefore, we must now appeal, carefully examining the strata of recent formation wherein the remains of *living* species, both animal and vegetable, are known to occur. We must study these strata in strict reference to their chronological order, as deduced from their superposition, and other relations. From these sources we may learn which of the species, now our contemporaries, have survived the greatest revolutions of the earth's surface ; which of them have co-existed with the greatest number of animals and plants now extinct, and which have made their appearance only when the animate world had nearly attained its present condition.

From such data we may be enabled to infer, whether species have been

called into existence in succession, or all at one period ; whether singly, or by groups simultaneously ; whether the antiquity of man be as high as that of any of the inferior beings which now share the planet with him, or whether the human species is one of the most recent of the whole.

To some of these questions we can even now return a satisfactory answer ; and with regard to the rest, we have some data to guide conjecture, and to enable us to speculate with advantage : but it would be premature to anticipate such discussions until I have laid before the reader an ample body of materials amassed by the industry of modern geologists.

CHAPTER XII.

EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE POWERS OF VITALITY ON THE STATE OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE.

Modifications in physical geography caused by organic beings—Why the vegetable soil does not augment in thickness—The theory, that vegetation is an antagonist power counterbalancing the degradation caused by running water, untenable (p. 101.)—Conservative influence of vegetation (p. 103.)—Rain diminished by felling of forests—Distribution of American forests dependent on direction of predominant winds (p. 106.)—Influence of man in modifying the physical geography of the globe.

THE second branch of our inquiry, respecting changes of the organic world, relates to the processes by which the remains of animals and plants become fossil, or, to speak still more generally, to all the effects produced by the powers of vitality on the surface and shell of the earth.

Before entering on the principal division of this subject, the imbedding and preservation of animal and vegetable remains, I shall offer a few remarks on the superficial modifications caused directly by the agency of organic beings, as when the growth of certain plants covers the slope of a mountain with heat, or converts a swamp into dry land ; or when vegetation prevents the soil, in certain localities, from being washed away by running water.

In considering alterations of this kind, brought about in the physical geography of particular tracts, we are too apt to think exclusively of that part of the earth's surface which has emerged from beneath the waters, and with which alone, as terrestrial beings, we are familiar. Here the direct power of animals and plants to cause any important variation is, of necessity, very limited, except in checking the progress of that decay

of which the land is the chief theatre. But if we extend our views, and, instead of contemplating the dry land, consider that larger portion which is assigned to the aquatic tribes, we discover the great influence of the living creation, in imparting varieties of conformation to the solid exterior which the agency of inanimate causes alone could not produce.

Thus, when timber is floated into the sea, it is often drifted to vast distances, and subsides in spots where there might have been no deposit, at that time and place, if the earth had not been tenanted by living beings. If, therefore, in the course of ages, a hill of wood, or lignite, be thus formed in the subaqueous regions, a change in the submarine geography may be said to have resulted from the action of organic powers. So in regard to the growth of coral reefs ; it is probable that almost all the matter of which they are composed is supplied by mineral springs, which often rise up at the bottom of the sea, and which, on land, abound throughout volcanic regions hundreds of leagues in extent. The matter thus constantly given out could not go on accumulating for ever in the waters, but would be precipitated in the abysses of the sea, even if there were no polyps and testacea ; but these animals arrest and secrete the carbonate of lime on the summits of submarine mountains, and form reefs many hundred feet in thickness, and hundreds of miles in length, where, but for them, none might ever have existed.

Why the vegetable soil does not augment in thickness.—If no such voluminous masses are formed on the land, it is not from the want of solid matter in the structure of terrestrial animals and plants ; but merely because, as I have so often stated, the continents are those parts of the globe where accessions of matter can scarcely ever take place—where, on the contrary, the most solid parts already formed are, each in their turn, exposed to gradual degradation. The quantity of timber and vegetable matter which grows in a tropical forest in the course of a century is enormous, and multitudes of animal skeletons are scattered there during the same period, besides innumerable land-shells and other organic substances. The aggregate of these materials, therefore, might constitute a mass greater in volume than that which is produced in any coral-reef during the same lapse of years ; but, although this process should continue on the land for ever, no mountains of wood or bone would be seen stretching far and wide over the country, or pushing out bold promontories into the sea. The whole solid mass is either devoured by animals, or decomposes, as does a portion of the rock and soil on which the animals and plants are supported.

The waste of the strata themselves, accompanied by the decomposition of their organic remains, and the setting free of their alkaline ingredients, is one source from whence running water and the atmosphere may derive the materials which are absorbed by the roots and leaves of plants. Another source is the passage into a gaseous form of even the hardest parts of animals and plants which die and putrefy in the air, where they

are soon resolved into the elements of which they are composed ; and while a portion of these constituents is volatilized, the rest is taken up by rain water, and sinks into the earth, or flows towards the sea ; so that they enter again and again into the composition of different organic beings.

The principal elements found in plants are hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen ; so that water and the atmosphere contain all of them, either in their own composition or in solution.* The constant supply of these elements is maintained not only by the putrefaction of animal and vegetable substances, and the decay of rocks, but also by the copious evolution of carbonic acid and other gases from volcanos and mineral springs, and by the effects of ordinary evaporation, whereby aqueous vapours are made to rise from the ocean, and to circulate round the globe.

It is well known that, when two gases of different specific gravity are brought into contact, even though the heavier be the lowermost, they soon become uniformly diffused by mutual absorption through the whole space which they occupy. By virtue of this law, the heavy carbonic acid finds its way upwards through the lighter air of the atmosphere, and conveys nourishment to the lichen which covers the mountain top.

The fact, therefore, that the vegetable mould which covers the earth's surface does not increase in thickness, will not altogether bear out the argument which was founded upon it by Playfair. This vegetable soil, he observes, consists partly of loose earthy materials, easily removed, in the form of sand and gravel ; partly of finer particles, suspended in the waters, which tinge those of some rivers continually, and those of all occasionally, when they are flooded. "The soil," he supposes, "although continually diminished from this cause, remains the same in quantity, or at least nearly the same, and must have done so ever since the earth was the receptacle of animal or vegetable life. The soil, therefore, is augmented from other causes, just as much, at an average, as it is diminished by that now mentioned ; and this augmentation evidently can proceed from nothing but the constant and slow disintegration of the rocks."†

That the repair of the *earthy* portion of the soil can proceed, as Playfair suggests, only from the decomposition of rocks, may be admitted ; but the *vegetable* matter, may be supplied, and is actually furnished, in a great degree, by the absorption by plants of carbon and oxygen from the atmosphere ; so that in level situations, such as in platforms that intervene between valleys where the action of running water is very trifling, the vegetable particles carried off by the rain may be perpetually restored, not by the waste of the rock below, but from the air above.

* See some good remarks on the Formation of Soils, Bakewell's *Geology*, chap. xviii.

† *Illust. of Hutt. Theory*, § 103.

If the quantity of food consumed by terrestrial animals, and the elements imbibed by the roots and leaves of plants, were derived entirely from that supply of hydrogen, carbon, oxygen, azote, and other elements, given out into the atmosphere and the waters by the putrescence of organic substances, then we might imagine that the vegetable mould would, after a series of years, neither gain nor lose a single particle by the action of organic beings; and this conclusion is not far from the truth; but the operation which renovates the vegetable and animal mould is by no means so simple as that here supposed. Thousands of carcasses of terrestrial animals are floated down, every century, into the sea; and, together with forests of drift-timber, are imbedded in subaqueous deposits, where their elements are imprisoned in solid strata, and may there remain throughout whole geological epochs before they again become subservient to the purposes of life.

On the other hand, fresh supplies are derived by the atmosphere, and by running water, as before stated, from the disintegration of rocks and their organic contents, and through the agency of mineral springs from the interior of the earth, from whence all the elements before mentioned, which enter principally into the composition of animals and vegetables, are continually evolved. Even nitrogen has been recently found, by Dr. Daubeny, to be contained very generally in the waters of mineral springs.

Vegetation not an antagonist power counterbalancing the action of running water.—If we suppose that the copious supply from the nether regions, by springs and volcanic vents, of carbonic acid and other gases, together with the decomposition of rocks, may be just sufficient to counterbalance that loss of matter which, having already served for the nourishment of animals and plants, is annually carried down in organized forms, and buried in subaqueous strata, we concede the utmost that is consistent with probability. An opinion, however, has been expressed, that the processes of vegetable life, by absorbing various gases from the atmosphere, cause so large a mass of solid matter to accumulate on the surface of the land, that this mass alone may constitute a great counterpoise to all the matter transported to lower levels by the aqueous agents of decay. Torrents and rivers, it is said—the waves of the sea and marine currents—act upon lines only; but the power of vegetation to absorb the elastic and non-elastic fluids circulating round the earth, extends over the whole surface of the continents. By the silent but universal action of this great antagonist power, the spoliation and waste caused by running water on the land, and by the movements of the ocean, are neutralized, and even counterbalanced.*

* See Professor Sedgwick's Address to the Geological Society on the Anniversary, Feb. 1831, p. 24.

In opposition to these views, I conceive that we shall form a juster estimate of the influence of vegetation if we consider it as being in a slight degree conservative, and capable of retarding the waste of land, but not of acting as an antagonist power. The vegetable mould is seldom more than a few feet in thickness, and frequently does not exceed a few inches ; and we by no means find that its volume is more considerable on those parts of our continents which we can prove, by geological data, to have been elevated at more ancient periods, and where, consequently, there has been the greatest time for the accumulation of vegetable matter, produced throughout successive zoological epochs. On the contrary, these higher and older regions are more frequently denuded, so as to expose the bare rock to the action of the sun and air.

We find in the torrid zone, where the growth of plants is most rank and luxurious, that accessions of matter due to their agency are by no means the most conspicuous. Indeed it is in these latitudes, where the vegetation is most active, that, for reasons to be explained in the next chapter, even those superficial peat mosses are unknown which cover a large area in some parts of our temperate zone. If the operation of animal and vegetable life could restore to the general surface of the continents a portion of the elements of those disintegrated rocks, of which such enormous masses are swept down annually into the sea, the effects would long ere this have constituted one of the most striking features in the structure and composition of our continents. All the great steppes and table-lands of the world, where the action of running water is feeble, would have become the grand repositories of organic matter, accumulated without that intermixture of earthy sediment which so generally characterizes the subaqueous strata.

Even the formation of peat in certain districts where the climate is cold and moist has not, in every instance, a conservative tendency. A peat-moss often acts like a vast sponge, absorbing water in large quantities, and swelling to the height of many yards above the surrounding country. In that case the turfy covering of the bog serves, like the skin of a bladder, to retain for a while the fluid within ; and when that skin bursts, as has often happened in Ireland, and many parts of the continent, a violent inundation ensues. Examples will be mentioned in a subsequent chapter, where the muddy torrent has hollowed out ravines, and borne along rocks and sand, in countries where such ravages could not have happened but for the existence of peat.

I may explain more clearly the kind of force which I imagine vegetation to exert, by comparing it to the action of frost, which augments the height of some few alpine summits, by causing masses of perpetual snow to accumulate upon them, or fills up some valleys with glaciers ; but although by this process of congelation the rain-water that has risen by

evaporation from the sea is retained for a while in a solid form upon the land, and though some elevated spots may be protected from waste by a constant covering of ice, yet, on the other hand, the sudden melting of snow often accelerates the degradation of rock. Although every year fresh snow and ice are formed, as also more vegetable and animal matter, yet there is no increase; the one melts, the other putrefies, or is drifted down to the sea by rivers. If this were not the case, frost might be considered as an antagonist power, as well as the action of animal and vegetable life.

I have already stated that, in the known operation of the *igneous* causes, a real antagonist power is found, which may counterbalance the levelling action of running water;* and there seems no good reason for presuming that the upheaving and depressing force of earthquakes, together with the ejection of matter by volcanos, may not be fully adequate to restore that inequality of the surface which rivers and the waves and currents of the ocean annually tend to lessen. If a counterpoise be derived from this source, the quantity and elevation of land above the sea may for ever remain the same, in spite of the action of the aqueous causes, which, if thus counteracted, may never be able to reduce the surface of the earth more nearly to a state of equilibrium than that which it has now attained; and, on the other hand, the force of the aqueous agents themselves might thus continue for ever unimpaired. This permanence of the average intensity of the powers now in operation would account for any amount of disturbance or degradation of the earth's crust, so far as the *mere quantity* of movement or decay is concerned; provided only that indefinite periods of time are contemplated.

As to the intensity of the disturbing causes at particular epochs, their effects have as yet been studied for too short a time to enable us fully to compare the signs of ancient convulsions with the permanent monuments left in the earth's crust by the events of the last few thousand years. But, notwithstanding the small number of changes which have been witnessed and carefully recorded, observation has at least shown that our knowledge of the extent of the subterranean agency, as now developed from time to time, is in its infancy; and there can be no doubt that great partial alterations in the structure of the earth's crust are brought about in volcanic regions, without any interruption to the general tranquillity of the habitable surface.

Conservative influence of vegetation.—If, then, vegetation cannot act as an antagonist power amid the mighty agents of change which are always modifying the surface of the globe, let us next inquire how far its influence is conservative,—how far it may retard the levelling effects of running water, which it cannot oppose, much less counterbalance.

* Vol. I. pp. 167. 477.

It is well known that a covering of herbage and shrubs may protect a loose soil from being carried away by rain, or even by the ordinary action of a river, and may prevent hills of loose sand from being blown away by the wind; for the roots bind together the separate particles into a firm mass, and the leaves intercept the rain-water, so that it dries up gradually instead of flowing off in a mass and with great velocity. The old Italian hydrographers make frequent mention of the increased degradation which has followed the clearing away of natural woods in several parts of Italy. A remarkable example was afforded in the Upper Val d'Arno, in Tuscany, on the removal of the woods clothing the steep declivities of the hills by which that valley is bounded. When the ancient forest laws were abolished by the Grand Duke Joseph, during the last century, a considerable tract of surface in the Cassentina (the Clausentinum of the Romans) was denuded, and immediately the quantity of sand and soil washed down into the Arno increased enormously. Frisi, alluding to such occurrences, observes, that as soon as the bushes and plants were removed, the waters flowed off more rapidly, and, in the manner of floods, swept away the vegetable soil.*

This effect of vegetation is of high interest to the geologist, when he is considering the formation of those valleys which have been principally due to the action of rivers. The spaces intervening between valleys, whether they be flat or ridgy, when covered with vegetation, may scarcely undergo the slightest waste, as the surface may be protected by the green sward of grass; and this may be renewed, in the manner before described, from elements derived from rain-water and the atmosphere. Hence, while the river is continually bearing down matter in the alluvial plain, and undermining cliffs on each side of every valley, the height of the intervening rising grounds may remain stationary.

In this manner, a cone of loose scoriæ, sand, and ashes, such as Monte Nuovo, may, when it has once become densely clothed with herbage and shrubs, suffer scarcely any further dilapidation; and the perfect state of the cones of hundreds of extinct volcanos in France, Campania, Sicily, and elsewhere, may prove nothing whatever, either as to their relative or absolute antiquity. We may be enabled to infer, from the integrity of such conical hills of incoherent materials, that no flood can have passed over the countries where they are situated, since their formation; but the atmospheric action alone, in spots where there happen to be no torrents, and where the surface was clothed with vegetation, could scarcely in any lapse of ages have destroyed them.

During a tour in Spain, in 1830, I was surprised to see a district of gently undulating ground in Catalonia, consisting of red and gray sandstone, and

* Treatise on Rivers and Torrents, p. 5. Garston's translation.

in some parts of red marl, almost entirely denuded of herbage ; while the roots of the pines, holm oaks, and some other trees, were half exposed, as if the soil had been washed away by a flood. Such is the state of the forests, for example, between Oristo and Vich, and near San Lorenzo. But, being overtaken by a violent thunder-storm, in the month of August, I saw the whole surface, even the highest levels of some flat-topped hills, streaming with mud, while on every declivity the devastation of torrents was terrific. The peculiarities in the physiognomy of the district were at once explained ; and I was taught that, in speculating on the greater effects which the direct action of rain may once have produced on the surface of certain parts of England, we need not revert to periods when the heat of the climate was *tropical*.

In the torrid zone the degradation of land is generally more rapid ; but the waste is by no means proportioned to the superior quantity of rain or the suddenness of its fall, the transporting power of water being counteracted by a greater luxuriance of vegetation. A geologist who is no stranger to tropical countries observes, that the softer rocks would speedily be washed away in such regions, if the numerous roots of plants were not matted together in such a manner as to produce considerable resistance to the destructive power of the rains. The parasitical and creeping plants also entwine in every possible direction, so as to render the forests nearly impervious, and the trees possess forms and leaves best calculated to shoot off the heavy rains ; which, when they have thus been broken in their fall, are quickly absorbed by the ground beneath, or, when thrown into the drainage depressions, give rise to furious torrents.*

Influence of Man in modifying the Physical Geography of the Globe.

Before concluding this chapter, I shall offer a few observations on the influence of man in modifying the physical geography of the globe ; for we must class his agency among the powers of organic nature.

Felling of forests.—The felling of forests has been attended, in many countries, by a diminution of rain, as in Barbadoes and Jamaica.† For in tropical countries, where the quantity of aqueous vapour in the atmosphere is great, but where, on the other hand, the direct rays of the sun are most powerful, any impediment to the free circulation of air, or any screen which shades the earth from the solar rays, becomes a source of humidity ; and wherever dampness and cold have begun to be generated by such causes, the condensation of vapour continues. The leaves, moreover, of all plants are alembics, and some of those in the torrid zone

* De la Beche, Geol. Man., p. 184, first ed.

† Phil. Trans., vol. ii. p. 294.

have the remarkable property of distilling water, thus contributing to prevent the earth from becoming parched up.

Distribution of the American forests.—There can be no doubt, then, that the state of the climate, especially the humidity of the atmosphere, influences vegetation, and that, in its turn, vegetation re-acts upon the climate; but some writers seem to have attributed too much importance to the influence of forests, particularly those of America, as if they were the primary cause of the moisture of the climate.

The theory of a modern author on this subject “that forests exist in those parts of America only where the predominant winds carry with them a considerable quantity of moisture from the ocean,” seems far more rational. In all countries, he says, “having a summer heat exceeding 70° , the presence or absence of natural woods, and their greater or less luxuriance, may be taken as a measure of the amount of humidity, and of the fertility of the soil. Short and heavy rains, in a warm country, will produce grass, which, having its roots near the surface, springs up in a few days, and withers when the moisture is exhausted; but transitory rains, however heavy, will not nourish trees; because, after the surface is saturated with water, the rest runs off, and the moisture lodged in the soil neither sinks deep enough, nor is in sufficient quantity to furnish the giants of the forest with the necessary sustenance. It may be assumed that twenty inches of rain falling moderately, or at intervals, will leave a greater permanent supply in the soil than forty inches falling, as it sometimes does in the torrid zone, in as many hours.”*

“In all regions,” he continues, “where ranges of mountains intercept the course of the constant or predominant winds, the country on the windward side of the mountains will be moist, and that on the leeward dry; and hence parched deserts will generally be found on the west side of countries within the tropics, and on the east side of those beyond them, the prevailing winds in these cases being generally in opposite directions. On this principle, the position of forests in North and South America may be explained. Thus, for example, in the region within the thirtieth parallel, the moisture swept up by the trade-wind from the Atlantic is precipitated in part upon the mountains of Brazil, which are but low, and so distributed as to extend far into the interior. The portion which remains is borne westward, and, losing a little as it proceeds, is at length arrested by the Andes, where it falls down in showers on their summits. The aerial current, now deprived of all the humidity with which it can part, arrives in a state of complete exsiccation at Peru, where, consequently, no rain falls. In the same manner the Ghauts in India, a chain only three or four thousand feet high, intercept the whole moisture of the atmosphere,

* Maclaren, art. America, Encyc. Britannica.

having copious rains on their windward side, while on the other the weather remains clear and dry. The rains in this case change regularly from the west side to the east, and vice versâ, *with the monsoons*. But in the region of America, beyond the thirtieth parallel, the Andes serve as a screen to intercept the moisture brought by the prevailing winds from the Pacific Ocean: rains are copious on their summits, and in Chili on their *western* declivities; but none falls on the plains to the *eastward*, except occasionally when the wind blows from the Atlantic.”*

I have been more particular in explaining these views, because they appear to place in a true light the dependence of vegetation on climate, the humidity being increased, and more uniformly diffused throughout the year, by the gradual spreading of wood.

It has been affirmed, that formerly, when France and England were covered with wood, Europe was much colder than at present; that the winters in Italy were longer, and that the Seine, and many other rivers, froze more regularly every winter than now. M. Arago, in a recent essay on this subject, has endeavoured to show, by tables of observations on the congelation of the Rhine, Danube, Rhone, Po, Seine, and other rivers, at different periods, that there is no reason to believe the cold to have been in general more intense in ancient times.† He admits, however, that the climate of Tuscany has been so far modified, by the removal of wood, as that the winters are less cold; but the summers also, he contends, are less hot than of old; and the summers, according to him, were formerly hotter in France than in our own times. His evidence is derived chiefly from documents showing that wine was made three centuries ago in the Vivarais and several other provinces, at an earlier season, at greater elevations, and in higher latitudes, than are now found suitable to the vine.

In the United States of North America it is unquestionable that the rapid *clearing* of the country has rendered the winters less severe, and the summers less hot; in other words, the extreme temperatures of January and July have been observed from year to year to approach nearer to each other. Whether in this case, or in France, the *mean* temperature has been raised, seems by no means as yet decided: but there is no doubt that the climate has become, as Buffon would have said, “less excessive.”

The modifications of the surface, resulting from human agency, are only great when we have obtained so much knowledge of the working of the laws of nature as to be enabled to use them as powerful instruments to effect our purposes. We command nature, according to the saying of the philosopher, by obeying her laws; and for this reason we can never

* Maclaren, art. America, Encyc. Britannica, where the position of the American forests, in accordance with this theory, is laid down in a map.

† Annuaire du Bureau des Long. 1834.

materially interfere with any of the great changes which either the aqueous or igneous causes are bringing about on the earth. In vain would the inhabitants of Italy strive to prevent the tributaries of the Po and Adige from bearing down, annually, an immense volume of sand and mud from the Alps and Apennines; in vain would they toil to reconvey to the mountains the mass torn from them year by year, and deposited in the form of sediment in the Adriatic. Yet they have been able to vary the distribution of this sediment over a considerable area, by embanking the rivers, and preventing the sand and mud from being spread by annual inundations over the plains.

I have explained how the form of the delta of the Po has been altered by this system of embankment, and how much more rapid have been the accessions of land at the mouths of the Po and Adige within the last twenty centuries. There is a limit, however, to these modifications, since the danger of floods augments with the increasing height of the river-beds, while the expense of maintaining the barrier is considerably enhanced, as well as the difficulty of draining the low surrounding country. "In the Ganges," says Major R. H. Colebrooke, "no sooner is a slight covering of soil observed on a new sand-bank than the island is cultivated; water-melons, cucumbers, and mustard, become the produce of the first year; and rice is often seen growing near the water's edge, where the mud is in large quantity. Such islands may be swept away before they have acquired a sufficient degree of stability to resist permanently the force of the stream; but if, by repeated additions of soil, they acquire height and firmness, the natives take possession, and bring over their families, cattle, and effects. They choose the highest spots for the sites of villages, where they erect their dwellings with as much confidence as they would do on the main land; for although the foundation is sandy, the uppermost soil, being interwoven with the roots of grass and other plants, and hardened by the sun, is capable of withstanding all attacks of the river. These islands often grow to a considerable size, and endure for the lives of the new possessors, being only at last destroyed by the same gradual process of undermining and encroachment to which the banks of the Ganges are subject."*

If Bengal were inhabited by a nation more advanced in opulence and agricultural skill, they might, perhaps, succeed in defending these possessions against the ravages of the stream for much longer periods; but no human power could ever prevent the Ganges or the Mississippi from making and unmaking islands. By fortifying one spot against the set of the current, its force is only diverted against some other point; and, after a vast expense of time and labour, the property of individuals may be saved, but no addition would thus be made to the sum of productive land.

* Asiatic Trans., vol. vii.

It may be doubted whether any system could be devised so conducive to *national* wealth as the simple plan pursued by the peasants of Hindostan, who, wasting no strength in attempts to thwart one of the great operations of nature, permit the alluvial surface to be perpetually renovated, and find their losses in one place compensated in some other, so that they continue to reap an undiminished harvest from a virgin soil.

To the geologist the Gangetic islands and their migratory colonies may present an epitome of the globe as tenanted by man; for during every century we cede some territory which the earthquake has sunk, or the volcano has covered by its fiery products, or which the ocean has devoured by its waves. On the other hand, we gain possession of new lands, which rivers, tides, or volcanic ejections have formed, or which subterranean causes have upheaved from the deep. Whether the human species will outlast the whole or a great part of the continents and islands now seen above the waters, is a question far beyond the reach of our conjectures; but thus much may be inferred from geological data,—that if such should be its fate, it will be no more than has already been the lot of pre-existing species, some of which have, ere now, outlived the form and distribution of land and sea which prevailed at the era of their birth.*

I have before shown, when treating of the excavation of new estuaries in Holland by inroads of the ocean, as also of the changes on our own coasts, that although the conversion of sea into land by artificial labours may be great, yet it must always be in subordination to the great movements of the tides and currents.† If, in addition to the assistance obtained by parliamentary grants for defending Dunwich from the waves, all the resources of Europe had been directed to the same end, the existence of that port might possibly have been prolonged for many centuries.‡ But, in the mean time, the current would have continued to sweep away portions from the adjoining cliffs on each side, rounding off the whole line of coast into its present form, until at length the town, projecting as a narrow promontory, must have become exposed to the irresistible fury of the waves.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the control which man can obtain over the igneous agents is less even than that which he may exert over the aqueous. He cannot modify the upheaving or depressing force of earthquakes, or the periods or degree of violence of volcanic eruptions; and on these causes the inequalities of the earth's surface, and, consequently, the shape of the sea and land, appear mainly to depend. The utmost that man can hope to effect in this respect is occasionally to divert the course of a lava stream, and to prevent the burning matter, for a season, from overwhelming a city, or some other of the proudest works of human industry.

* See Book iv. chap. ix.

† Book ii. chap. vii.

‡ Vol. I. p. 256.

No application, perhaps, of human skill and labour tends so greatly to vary the state of the habitable surface, as that employed in the drainage of lakes and marshes, since not only the *stations* of many animals and plants, but the general climate of a district, may thus be modified. It is also a kind of alteration to which it is difficult to find any thing analogous in the agency of inferior beings; for we ought always, before we decide that any part of the influence of man is novel and anomalous, carefully to consider the powers of all other animated agents which may be limited or superseded by him. Many who have reasoned on these subjects seem to have forgotten that the human race often succeeds to the discharge of functions previously fulfilled by other species; a topic on which I have already offered some hints, when explaining how the distribution and numbers of each species are dependent on the state of contemporary beings.

Suppose the growth of some of the larger terrestrial plants, or, in other words, the extent of forests, to be diminished by man, and the climate to be thereby modified, it does not follow that this kind of innovation is unprecedented. It is a change in the state of vegetation, and such may often have been the result of the appearance of new species upon the earth. The multiplication, for example, of certain insects in parts of Germany, during the last century, destroyed more trees than man, perhaps, could have felled during an equal period.

It would be rash, however, to pretend to decide how far the power of man to modify the surface may differ in kind or degree from that of other living beings; the problem is certainly more complex than many who have speculated on such topics have imagined. If land be raised from the sea, the greatest alteration in its physical condition, which could ever arise from the influence of organic beings, would probably be produced by the first immigration of terrestrial plants, whereby the new tract would become covered with vegetation. The change next in importance would seem to be when animals first enter, and modify the proportionate numbers of certain species of plants. If there be any anomaly in the intervention of man, in farther varying the relative numbers in the vegetable kingdom, it may not so much consist in the kind or absolute quantity of alteration, as in the circumstance that a *single species*, in this case, would exert, by its superior power and universal distribution, an influence equal to that of hundreds of other terrestrial animals.

If we inquire whether man, by his direct power, or by the changes which he may give rise to indirectly, tends, upon the whole, to lessen or increase the inequalities of the earth's surface, we shall incline, perhaps, to the opinion that he is a levelling agent. In mining operations he conveys upwards a certain quantity of materials from the bowels of the earth; but, on the other hand, much rock is taken annually from the land, in the shape of ballast, and afterwards thrown into the sea, and by this means,

in spite of prohibitory laws, many harbours, in various parts of the world, have been blocked up. We rarely transport heavy materials to higher levels, and our pyramids and cities are chiefly constructed of stone brought down from more elevated situations. By ploughing up thousands of square miles, and exposing a surface for part of the year to the action of the elements, we assist the abrading force of rain, and diminish the conservative effects of vegetation.

But the aggregate force exerted by man is truly insignificant, when we consider the operations of the great physical agents, whether aqueous or igneous, of the inanimate world. If all the nations of the earth should attempt to quarry away the lava which flowed during one eruption from the Icelandic volcanos in 1783, and the two following years, and should attempt to consign it to the deepest abysses of the ocean, they might toil for thousands of years before their task was accomplished. Yet the matter borne down by the Ganges and Burrampooter, in a single year, probably very much exceeds, in weight and volume, the mass of Icelandic lava produced by that great eruption.*

CHAPTER XIII.

INCLOSING OF FOSSILS IN PEAT, BLOWN SAND, AND VOLCANIC EJECTIONS.

Division of the subject—Imbedding of organic remains in deposits on emerged land—Growth of peat—Site of ancient forests in Europe now occupied by peat—Bog iron-ore (p. 115.)—Preservation of animal substances in peat—Miring of quadrupeds—Bursting of the Solway moss—Imbedding of organic bodies and human remains in blown sand (p. 118.)—Moving sands of African deserts—De Luc on their recent origin—Buried temple of Ipsambul—Dried carcasses in the sands—Towns overwhelmed by sand-floods—Imbedding of organic and other remains in volcanic formations on the land.

Division of the subject.—THE next subject of inquiry is the mode in which the remains of animals and plants become fossil, or are buried in the earth by natural causes. M. Constant Prevost has observed, that the effects of geological causes are divisible into two great classes; those produced on the surface during the submersion of land beneath the waters, and those which take place after its emersion. Agreeably to this classifi-

* Vol. I. p. 232.

cation, I shall consider, first, in what manner animal and vegetable remains become included and preserved in deposits on emerged land, or that part of the surface which is not *permanently* covered by water, whether of seas or lakes ; secondly, the manner in which organic remains become imbedded in subaqueous deposits.

Under the first division, I shall treat of the following topics :—1st, the growth of peat, and the preservation of vegetable and animal remains therein ;—2dly, the burying of organic remains in blown sand ;—3dly, of the same in the ejections and alluviums of volcanos ;—4thly, in alluviums generally, and in the ruins of landslips ;—5thly, in the mud and stalagmite of caves and fissures.

Growth of Peat, and Preservation of Vegetable and Animal Remains therein.

The generation of peat, when not completely under water, is confined to moist situations, where the temperature is low, and where vegetables may decompose without putrefying. It may consist of any of the numerous plants which are capable of growing in such *stations* ; but a species of moss (*Sphagnum palustre*) constitutes a considerable part of the peat found in marshes of the north of Europe ; this plant having the property of throwing up new shoots in its upper part, while its lower extremities are decaying.* Reeds, rushes, and other aquatic plants may usually be traced in peat ; and their organization is often so entire that there is no difficulty in discriminating the distinct species.

Analysis of peat.—In general, says Sir H. Davy, one hundred parts of dry peat contain from sixty to ninety-nine parts of matter destructible by fire ; and the residuum consists of earths usually of the same kind as the substratum of clay, marl, gravel, or rock, on which they are found, together with oxide of iron. “The peat of the chalk counties of England,” observes the same writer, “contains much gypsum ; but I have found very little in any specimens from Ireland or Scotland, and in general these peats contain very little saline matter.”† From the researches of Dr. MacCulloch, it appears that peat is intermediate between simple vegetable matter and lignite, the conversion of peat to lignite being gradual, and being brought about by the prolonged action of water.‡

Peat abundant in cold and humid climates.—Peat is sometimes formed on a declivity in mountainous regions, where there is much moisture ; but in such situations it rarely, if ever, exceeds four feet in thickness. In bogs, and in low grounds into which alluvial peat is drifted, it is found

* For a catalogue of the plants which contribute to the generation of peat, see Dr. Rennie on Peat, pp. 171—178 ; and Dr. MacCulloch’s *Western Isles*, vol. i. p. 129.

† *Irish Bog Reports*, p. 209.

‡ *System of Geology*, vol. ii. p. 353.

forty feet thick, and upwards ; but in such cases it generally owes one half of its volume to the water which it contains. It has seldom, if ever, been discovered within the tropics ; and it rarely occurs in the valleys, even in the south of France and Spain. It abounds more and more, in proportion as we advance farther from the equator, and becomes not only more frequent but more inflammable in northern latitudes.*

Extent of surface covered by peat.—There is a vast extent of surface in Europe covered with peat, which, in Ireland, is said to extend over a tenth of the whole island. One of the mosses on the Shannon is described by Dr. Boate to be fifty miles long, by two or three broad ; and the great marsh of Montoire, near the mouth of the Loire, is mentioned, by Blavier, as being more than fifty leagues in circumference. It is a curious and well ascertained fact, that many of these mosses of the north of Europe occupy the place of forests of pine and oak, which have, many of them, disappeared within the historical era. Such changes are brought about by the fall of trees and the stagnation of water, caused by their trunks and branches obstructing the free drainage of the atmospheric waters, and giving rise to a marsh. In a warm climate, such decayed timber would immediately be removed by insects, or by putrefaction ; but, in the cold temperature now prevailing in our latitudes, many examples are recorded of marshes originating in this source. Thus, in Mar forest, in Aberdeenshire, large trunks of Scotch fir, which had fallen from age and decay, were soon immured in peat, formed partly out of their perishing leaves and branches, and in part from the growth of other plants. We also learn, that the overthrow of a forest by a storm, about the middle of the seventeenth century, gave rise to a peat moss near Lochbroom, in Ross-shire, where, in less than half a century, after the fall of the trees, the inhabitants dug peat.† Dr. Walker mentions a similar change, when, in the year 1756, the whole wood of Drumlanrig in Dumfries-shire was overset by the wind. Such events explain the occurrence, both in Britain and on the Continent, of mosses where the trees are all broken within two or three feet of the original surface, and where their trunks all lie in the same direction.‡

Nothing is more common than the occurrence of buried trees at the bottom of the Irish peat-mosses, as also in most of those of England, France, and Holland ; and they have been so often observed with parts of their trunks standing erect, and with their roots fixed to the sub-soil, that no doubt can be entertained of their having generally grown on the spot. They consist, for the most part, of the fir, the oak, and the birch : where the sub-soil is clay, the remains of oak are the most abundant ; where sand is the substratum, fir prevails. In the marsh of Curragh, in the

* Rev. Dr. Rennie on Peat, p. 260.

† Dr. Rennie's Essays, p. 65.

‡ Dr. Rennie's Essays, p. 30.

Isle of Man, vast trees are discovered standing firm on their roots, though at the depth of eighteen or twenty feet below the surface. Some naturalists have desired to refer the imbedding of timber in peat-mosses to aqueous transportation, since rivers are well known to float wood into lakes ; but the facts above mentioned show that, in numerous instances, such an hypothesis is inadmissible. It has, moreover, been observed, that in Scotland, as also in many parts of the Continent, the largest trees are found in those peat-mosses which lie in the least elevated regions, and that the trees are proportionally smaller in those which lie at higher levels ; from which fact De Luc and Walker have both inferred, that the trees grew on the spot, for they would naturally attain a greater size in lower and warmer levels. The leaves also, and fruits of each species, are continually found immersed in the moss along with the parent trees ; as, for example, the leaves and acorns of the oak, the cones and leaves of the fir, and the nuts of the hazel.

Recent origin of some peat-mosses.—In Hatfield moss, which appears clearly to have been a forest eighteen hundred years ago, fir-trees have been found ninety feet long, and sold for masts and keels of ships ; oaks have also been discovered there above one hundred feet long. The dimensions of an oak from this moss are given in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 275, which must have been larger than any tree now existing in the British dominions.

In the same moss of Hatfield, as well as in that of Kincardine, and several others, Roman roads have been found covered to the depth of eight feet by peat. All the coins, axes, arms, and other utensils found in British and French mosses, are also Roman ; so that a considerable portion of the European peat-bogs are evidently not more ancient than the age of Julius Cæsar. Nor can any vestiges of the ancient forests described by that general, along the line of the great Roman way in Britain, be discovered, except in the ruined trunks of trees in peat.

De Luc ascertained that the very site of the aboriginal forests of Hircinia, Semana, Ardennes, and several others, are now occupied by mosses and fens ; and a great part of these changes have, with much probability, been attributed to the strict orders given by Severus, and other emperors, to destroy all the wood in the conquered provinces. Several of the British forests, however, which are now mosses, were cut at different periods, by order of the English parliament, because they harboured wolves or outlaws. Thus the Welsh woods were cut and burnt, in the reign of Edward I. ; as were many of those in Ireland, by Henry II., to prevent the natives from harbouring in them, and harassing his troops.

It is curious to reflect that considerable tracts have, by these accidents, been permanently sterilized, and that, during a period when civilization has been making great progress, large areas in Europe have, by human agency, been rendered less capable of administering to the wants of man.

Rennie observes, with truth, that in those regions alone which the Roman eagle never reached—in the remote circles of the German Empire, in Poland and Prussia, and still more in Norway, Sweden, and the vast empire of Russia—can we see what Europe was before it yielded to the power of Rome.* Desolation now reigns where stately forests of pine and oak once flourished, such as might now have supplied all the navies of Europe with timber.

Sources of bog iron-ore.—At the bottom of peat-mosses there is sometimes found a cake, or “pan,” as it is termed, of oxide of iron, and the frequency of bog iron-ore is familiar to the mineralogist. The oak, which is so often found dyed black in peat, owes its colour to the same metal.

From what source the iron is derived is by no means obvious, since we cannot in all cases suppose that it has been precipitated from the waters of mineral springs. According to Fourcroy there is iron in all compact wood, and it is the cause of one-twelfth part of the weight of oak. The heaths (*Ericæ*) which flourish in a sandy ferruginous soil, are said to contain more iron than any other vegetable.

It has been suggested that iron, being soluble in acids, may be diffused through the whole mass of vegetables, when they decay in a bog, and may, by its superior specific gravity, sink to the bottom, and be there precipitated, so as to form bog iron-ore; or where there is a sub-soil of sand or gravel, it may cement them into iron stone or ferruginous conglomerate.†

Preservation of animal substances in peat.—One interesting circumstance attending the history of peat-mosses is the high state of preservation of animal substances buried in them for periods of many years. In June, 1747, the body of a woman was found six feet deep, in a peat-moor in the Isle of Axholm, in Lincolnshire. The antique sandals on her feet afforded evidence of her having been buried there for many ages; yet her nails, hair, and skin are described as having shown hardly any marks of decay. On the estate of the Earl of Moira, in Ireland, a human body was dug up, a foot deep in gravel, covered with eleven feet of moss; the body was completely clothed, and the garments seemed all to be made of hair. Before the use of wool was known in that country, the clothing of the inhabitants was made of hair, so that it would appear that this body had been buried at that early period; yet it was fresh and unimpaired.‡

In the Philosophical Transactions, we find an example recorded of the bodies of two persons having been buried in moist peat, in Derbyshire, in 1674, about a yard deep, which were examined twenty-eight years and nine months afterwards; “the colour of their skin was fair and natural, their flesh soft as that of persons newly dead.”§

Among other analogous facts we may mention, that in digging a pit

* Essays, &c., p. 74.

† Ibid., p. 347.

‡ Dr. Rennie, Essays, &c., p. 521, where several other instances are referred to.

§ Phil. Trans., vol. xxxviii., 1734.

for a well near Dulverton, in Somersetshire, many pigs were found in various postures, still entire. Their shape was well preserved, the skin, which retained the hair, having assumed a dry, membranous appearance. Their whole substance was converted into a white, friable, laminated, inodorous and tasteless substance; but which, when exposed to heat, emitted an odour precisely similar to broiled bacon.*

Cause of the antiseptic property of peat.—We naturally ask whence peat derives this antiseptic property? It has been attributed by some to the carbonic and gallic acids which issue from decayed wood, as also to the presence of charred wood in the lowest strata of many peat-mosses, for charcoal is a powerful antiseptic, and capable of purifying water already putrid. Vegetable gums and resins also may operate in the same way.†

The tannin occasionally present in peat is the produce, says Doctor MacCulloch, of tormentilla, and some other plants; but the quantity he thinks too small, and its occurrence too casual, to give rise to effects of any importance. He hints that the soft parts of animal bodies, preserved in peat bogs, may have been converted into adipocire by the action of water merely; an explanation which appears clearly applicable to some of the cases above enumerated.‡

Miring of quadrupeds.—The manner, however, in which peat contributes to preserve, for indefinite periods, the harder parts of terrestrial animals, is a subject of more immediate interest to the geologist. There are two ways in which animals become occasionally buried in the peat of marshy grounds; they either sink down into the semifluid mud, underlying a turfy surface, upon which they have rashly ventured, or, at other times, a bog “bursts,” in the manner before described, and animals may be involved in the peaty alluvium.§

In the extensive bogs of Newfoundland cattle are sometimes found buried with only their heads and neck above ground; and after having remained for days in this situation, they have been drawn out by ropes and saved. In Scotland, also, cattle venturing on the “quaking moss” are often mired, or “laired,” as it is termed; and in Ireland, Mr. King asserts that the number of cattle which are lost in sloughs is quite incredible.||

Solway moss.—The description given of the Solway moss will serve to illustrate the general character of these boggy grounds. That moss, observes Gilpin, is a flat area, about seven miles in circumference, situated on the confines of England and Scotland. Its surface is covered with grass and rushes, presenting a dry crust and a fair appearance; but it shakes under the least pressure, the bottom being unsound and semifluid. The adventurous passenger, therefore, who sometimes in dry seasons

* Dr. Rennie, *Essays, &c.*, p. 521.

† *Syst. of Geol.*, vol. ii. pp. 340—346.

|| *Phil. Trans.*, vol. xv. p. 949.

† *Ibid.*, p. 531.

§ See *ante*, p. 102.

traverses this perilous waste, to save a few miles, picks his cautious way over the rushy tussocks as they appear before him, for here the soil is firmest. If his foot slip, or if he venture to desert this mark of security, it is possible he may never more be heard of.

“At the battle of Solway, in the time of Henry VIII. (1542), when the Scotch army, commanded by Oliver Sinclair, was routed, an unfortunate troop of horse, driven by their fears, plunged into this morass, which instantly closed upon them. The tale was traditional, but it is now authenticated; a man and horse, in complete armour, having been found by peat-diggers, in the place where it was always supposed the affair had happened. The skeleton of each was well preserved, and the different parts of the armour easily distinguished.”*

The same moss, on the 16th of December, 1772, having been filled with water during heavy rains, rose to an unusual height, and then burst. A stream of black half-consolidated mud began at first to creep over the plain, resembling, in the rate of its progress, an ordinary lava current. No lives were lost, but the deluge totally overwhelmed some cottages, and covered 400 acres. The highest parts of the original moss subsided to the depth of about twenty-five feet; and the height of the moss, on the lowest parts of the country which it invaded, was at least fifteen feet.

Bursting of a peat-moss in Ireland.—A recent inundation in Sligo (January 1831) affords another example of this phenomenon. After a sudden thaw of snow, the bog between Bloomfield and Geevah gave way; and a black deluge, carrying with it the contents of a hundred acres of bog, took the direction of a small stream, and rolled on with the violence of a torrent, sweeping along heath, timber, mud, and stones, and overwhelming many meadows and arable land. On passing through some boggy land, the flood swept out a wide and deep ravine, and part of the road leading from Bloomfield to St. James’s Well was completely carried away from below the foundation for the breadth of 200 yards.

Bones of herbivorous quadrupeds in peat.—The antlers of large and full-grown stags are amongst the most common and conspicuous remains of animals in peat. They are not horns which have been shed; for portions of the skull are found attached, proving that the whole animal perished. Bones of the ox, hog, horse, sheep, and other herbivorous animals, also occur; and in Ireland and the Isle of Man skeletons of a gigantic elk. M. Morren has discovered in the peat of Flanders, the bones of otters and beavers;† but no remains have been met with belonging to those extinct quadrupeds of which the living congeners inhabit warmer latitudes, such as the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, hyæna, and tiger, though these are so common in superficial deposits of silt, mud, sand, or stalactite, in

* Observations on Picturesque Beauty, &c., 1772.

† Bulletin de la Soc. G  ol. de France, tom. ii. p. 26.

various districts throughout Great Britain. Their absence seems to imply that they had ceased to live before the atmosphere of this part of the world acquired that cold and humid character which favours the growth of peat.

Remains of ships, &c., in peat-mosses.—From the facts before mentioned, that mosses occasionally burst, and descend in a fluid state to lower levels, it will readily be seen that lakes and arms of the sea may occasionally become the receptacles of drift-peat. Of this, accordingly, there are numerous examples; and hence the alternations of clay and sand with different deposits of peat so frequent on some coasts, as on those of the Baltic and German Ocean. We are informed by Deguer that remains of ships, nautical instruments, and oars, have been found in many of the Dutch mosses; and Gerard, in his History of the Valley of the Somme, mentions that in the lowest tier of that moss was found a boat loaded with bricks, proving that these mosses were at one period navigable lakes and arms of the sea, as were also many mosses on the coast of Picardy, Zealand, and Friesland, from which soda and salt are procured.* The canoes, stone hatchets, and stone arrow-heads, found in peat in different parts of Great Britain, lead to similar conclusions.

Imbedding of Human and other Remains and Works of Art in Blown Sand.

The drifting of sand may next be considered among the causes capable of preserving organic remains and works of art on the emerged land.

African sands.—The sands of the African deserts have been driven by the west winds over all the lands capable of tillage on the western banks of the Nile, except such as are sheltered by mountains.† And thus the ruins of ancient cities have been buried between the Temple of Jupiter Ammon and Nubia. M. G. A. de Luc attempted to infer the recent origin of our continents, from the fact that these moving sands have arrived only in modern times at the fertile plains of the Nile. The same scourge, he said, would have afflicted Egypt for ages anterior to the time of history, had the continents risen above the level of the sea several hundred centuries before our era.‡ But the author proceeded in this, as in all his other chronological computations, on a multitude of gratuitous assumptions. He ought, in the first place, to have demonstrated that the whole continent of Africa was raised above the level of the sea at one period; for unless this point was established, the region from whence the sands began to move might have been the last addition made to Africa, and the commencement of the sand flood might have been long posterior to the laying

* Dr. Rennie, Essays on Peat-Moss, p. 205.

† M. G. A. de Luc, Mercure de France, Sept. 1809.

‡ Ibid.

dry of the greater portion of that continent. That the different parts of Europe were not all elevated at one time is now generally admitted. De Luc should also have pointed out the depth of drift sand in various parts of the great Libyan deserts, and have shown whether any valleys of large dimensions had been filled up—how long these may have arrested the progress of the sands, and how far the flood had upon the whole advanced since the times of history.

No mode of interment can be conceived more favourable to the conservation of monuments for indefinite periods than that now so common in the region immediately westward of the Nile. The sand which surrounded and filled the great temple of Ipsambul, first discovered by Burckhardt, and afterwards partially uncovered by Belzoni and Beechy, was so fine as to resemble a fluid when put in motion. Neither the features of the colossal figures, nor the colour of the stucco with which some were covered, nor the paintings on the walls, had received any injury from being enveloped for ages in this dry impalpable dust.*

At some future period, perhaps, when the pyramids shall have perished, the action of the sea, or an earthquake, may lay open to the day some of these buried temples. Or we may suppose the desert to remain undisturbed, and changes in the surrounding sea and land to modify the climate and the direction of the prevailing winds, so that these may then waft away the Libyan sands as gradually as they once brought them to those regions. Thus, many a town and temple of higher antiquity than Thebes or Memphis may re-appear in their original integrity, and a part of the gloom which overhangs the history of the earlier nations be dispelled.

Whole caravans are said to have been overwhelmed by the Libyan sands; and Burckhardt informs us that “after passing the Akaba, near the head of the Red Sea, the bones of dead camels are the only guides of the pilgrim through the wastes of sand.”—“We did not see,” says Captain Lyon, speaking of a plain near the Soudah mountains, in Northern Africa, “the least appearance of vegetation; but observed many skeletons of animals, which had died of fatigue on the desert, and occasionally the grave of some human being. All these bodies were so dried by the heat of the sun, that putrefaction appears not to have taken place after death. In recently expired animals I could not perceive the slightest offensive smell; and in those long dead, the skin with the hair on it remained unbroken and perfect, although so brittle as to break with a slight blow. The sand-winds never cause these carcasses to change their places; for, in a short time, a slight mound is formed round them, and they become stationary.”†

Towns overwhelmed by sand-floods.—The burying of several towns and villages in England and France by blown sand is on record; thus,

* Stratton, Ed. Phil. Journ., No. V. p. 62.

† Travels in North Africa in the years 1818, 1819, and 1820, p. 83.

for example, near St. Pol de Leon, in Brittany, a whole village was completely buried beneath drift sand, so that nothing was seen but the spire of the church.*

In Suffolk, in the year 1688, part of Downham was overwhelmed by sands which had broken loose about 100 years before, from a warren five miles to the south-west. This sand had, in the course of a century, travelled five miles, and covered more than 1000 acres of land.† A considerable tract of cultivated land on the north coast of Cornwall has been inundated by drift sand, forming hills several hundred feet above the level of the sea, and composed of comminuted marine shells, in which some terrestrial shells are inclosed entire. By the shifting of these sands the ruins of ancient buildings have been discovered; and in some cases where wells have been bored to a great depth, distinct strata, separated by a vegetable crust, are visible. In some places, as at New Quay, large masses have become sufficiently indurated to be used for architectural purposes. The lapidification, which is still in progress, appears to be due to oxide of iron held in solution by the water which percolates the sand.‡

Imbedding of Organic and other Remains in Volcanic Formations on the Land.

I have in some degree anticipated the subject of this section in a former volume, when speaking of the buried cities around Naples, and those on the flanks of Etna.§

From the facts referred to, it appeared that the preservation of human remains and works of art is frequently due to the descent of floods caused by the copious rains which accompany eruptions. These aqueous lavas, as they are called in Campania, flow with great rapidity; and in 1822 surprised and suffocated, as was stated, seven persons in the villages of St. Sebastian and Massa, on the flanks of Vesuvius.

In the tuffs, moreover, or solidified mud, deposited by these aqueous lavas, impressions of leaves and of trees have been observed. Some of those, formed after the eruption of Vesuvius in 1822, are now preserved in the museum at Naples.

Lava itself may become indirectly the means of preserving terrestrial remains, by overflowing beds of ashes, pumice, and ejected matter, which may have been showered down upon animals and plants, or upon human remains. Few substances are better non-conductors of heat than volcanic dust and scorix, so that a bed of such materials is rarely melted by a

* Mém. de l'Acad. des Sci. de Paris, 1772.—Malte Brun's Geog. vol. i. p. 425.

† Phil. Trans., vol. ii. p. 722.

‡ Boase on Submersion of Part of the Mount's Bay, &c., Trans. Roy. Geol. Soc. of Cornwall, vol. ii. p. 140.

§ Vol. I. pp. 322—337.

superimposed lava current. After consolidation, the lava affords secure protection to the lighter and more removable mass below, in which the organic relics may be enveloped. The Herculanean tuffs containing the rolls of Papyrus, of which the characters are still legible, have, as was before remarked, been for ages covered by lava.

Another mode by which lava may tend to the conservation of imbedded remains, at least of works of human art, is by its overflowing them when it is not intensely heated, in which case they sometimes suffer little or no injury.

Thus when the Etnean lava-current of 1669 covered fourteen towns and villages, and part of the city of Catania, it did not melt down a great number of statues and other articles in the vaults of Catania; and at the depth of thirty-five feet in the same current, on the site of Mompiliere, one of the buried towns, the bell of a church and some statues were found uninjured.*

There are several buried cities in Central India, which might probably yield a richer harvest to the antiquary than Pompeii and Herculaneum.† The city of Oujein (or Oojain) was, about fifty years before the Christian era, the seat of empire, of art, and of learning; but in the time of the Rajah Vicramaditya, it was overwhelmed, together, as tradition reports, with more than eighty other large towns in the provinces of Malwa and Bagur, “by a shower of earth.” The city which now bears the name is situated a mile to the southward of the ancient town. On digging on the spot where the latter is supposed to have stood, to the depth of fifteen or eighteen feet, there are frequently discovered, says Mr. Hunter, entire brick walls, pillars of stone, and pieces of wood of an extraordinary hardness, besides utensils of various kinds, and ancient coins. Many coins are also found in the channels cut by the periodical rains, or in the beds of torrents into which they have been washed. “During our stay at Oujein, a large quantity of wheat was found by a man digging for bricks. It was, as might have been expected, almost entirely consumed, and in a state resembling charcoal. In a ravine cut by the rains, from which several stone pillars had been dug, I saw a space from twelve to fifteen feet long and seven or eight high, composed of earthen vessels, broken and closely compacted together. It was conjectured, with great appearance of probability, to have been a potter’s kiln. Between this place and the new town is a hollow, in which, tradition says, the river Sipparah formerly ran. It changed its course at the time the city was buried, and now runs to the westward.”‡

The soil which covers Oujein is described as “being of an ash-gray colour, with minute specks of black sand.”§

* Vol. I. p. 337.

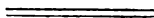
† Vol. I. p. 323.

‡ Narrative of Journey from Agra to Oujein, Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 36.

§ Asiatic Journal, vol. ix. p. 35.

That the "shower of earth" which is reported to have "fallen from heaven" was produced by a volcanic eruption, seems very probable, although no information has been obtained respecting the site of the vent; and the nearest volcano of which we read is that which was in eruption during the Cutch earthquake in 1819, at the distance of about thirty miles from Bhooj, the capital of Cutch, and at least 300 geographical miles from Oujein.

Captain F. Dangerfield, who accompanied Sir John Malcolm in his late expedition into Central India, states that the river Nerbuddah, in Malwa, has its channel excavated through *columnar basalt*, above which are beds of *marl* impregnated with salt. The upper of these marls is of a light colour, and from thirty to forty feet thick, and rests horizontally on the lower bed, which is of a reddish colour. Both appear from the description to be tuffs composed of the materials of volcanic ejections, and forming a covering from sixty to seventy feet deep overlying the basalt, which seems to resemble some of the currents of prismatic lava in Auvergne and the Vivarais. Near the middle of this tufaceous mass, and therefore at the depth of thirty feet or more from the surface, just where the two beds of tuff meet, Captain Dangerfield was shown, near the city of Mhysir, buried bricks and large earthen vessels, said to have belonged to the ancient city of Mhysir, destroyed by the catastrophe of Oujein.*



CHAPTER XIV.

BURYING OF FOSSILS IN ALLUVIAL DEPOSITS AND IN CAVES.

Alluvium defined—Effects of sudden inundations—Terrestrial animals most abundantly preserved in alluvium where earthquakes prevail—Marine alluvium—Buried town—Effects of landslips—Organic remains in fissures and caves—Form and dimensions of caverns—Their probable origin—Closed basins and engulfed rivers of the Morea (p. 127.)—Katavothra—Formation of breccias with red cement—Human remains imbedded in Morea—Intermixture in caves of south of France and elsewhere of human remains and bones of extinct quadrupeds no proof of former co-existence of man with those lost species (p. 132.).

Alluvium.—THE next subject for our consideration, according to the division before proposed, is the imbedding of organic bodies in alluvium, by which I mean such transported matter as has been thrown down,

* Sir J. Malcolm's Cent. Ind.—Geol. of Malwa, by Captain F. Dangerfield, App. No. ii. pp. 324, 325.

whether by rivers, floods, or other causes, upon land not *permanently* submerged beneath the waters of lakes or seas,—I say *permanently submerged*, in order to distinguish between *alluviums* and regular subaqueous deposits. These regular strata are accumulated in lakes or great submarine receptacles; but the alluviums in the channels of rivers and currents, where the materials may be regarded as still *in transitu*, or on their way to a place of rest. There may be cases where it is impossible to draw a line of demarcation between these two classes of formations, but these exceptions are rare; and the division is, upon the whole, convenient and natural.

The alluvium of the bed of a river does not often contain any animal or vegetable remains; for the whole mass is so continually shifting its place, and the attrition of the various parts is so great, that even the hardest rocks contained in it are, at length, ground down to powder. But when sand, mud, and rubbish, are suddenly swept by a flood, and then let fall upon the land, such an alluvium may envelope trees or the remains of animals, which, in this manner, are often permanently preserved. In the mud and sand produced by the floods in Scotland, in 1829, the dead and mutilated bodies of hares, rabbits, moles, mice, partridges, and even the bodies of men, were found partially buried.* But in these and similar cases one flood usually effaces the memorials left by another, and there is rarely a sufficient depth of undisturbed transported matter, in any one spot, to preserve the organic remains for ages from destruction.

Where earthquakes prevail, and the levels of a country are changed from time to time, the remains of animals may more easily be inhumed and protected from disintegration. Portions of plains, loaded with alluvial accumulations by transient floods, may be gradually upraised; and, if any organic remains have been imbedded in the transported materials, they may, after such elevation, be placed beyond the reach of the erosive power of streams. In districts where the drainage is repeatedly deranged by subterranean movements, every fissure, every hollow caused by the sinking in of land, becomes a depository of organic and inorganic substances, hurried along by transient floods.

Marine alluvium.—The term “marine alluvium” is, perhaps, admissible, if confined to banks of shingle thrown up like the Chesil bank in Dorsetshire, or to materials cast up by a wave of the sea upon the land, or those which a submarine current has left in its track. The kind last mentioned must necessarily, when the bed of the ocean is laid dry, resemble terrestrial alluviums; with this difference, that if any fragments of organic bodies have escaped destruction, they will belong principally to marine species.

In May, 1787, a dreadful inundation of the sea was caused at Coringa,

* Sir T. D. Lauder, Bart., on the great Floods in Morayshire, Aug. 1822, p. 177.

Ingeram, and other places, on the coast of Coromandel, in the East Indies, by a hurricane blowing from the N. E., which raised the waters so that they rolled inland to the distance of about twenty miles from the shore, swept away many villages, drowned more than 10,000 people, and left the country covered with marine mud, on which the carcasses of about 100,000 head of cattle were strewed. An old tradition of the natives of a similar flood, said to have happened about a century before, was, till this event, regarded as fabulous by the European settlers.* The same coast of Coromandel was, so late as May, 1832, the scene of another catastrophe of the same kind; and when the inundation subsided, several vessels were seen grounded in the fields of the low country about Coringa.

Many of the storms termed hurricanes have evidently been connected with submarine earthquakes, as is shown by the atmospheric phenomena attendant on them, and by the sounds heard in the ground, and the odours emitted. Such were the circumstances which accompanied the swell of the sea in Jamaica, in 1780, when a great wave desolated the western coast, and, bursting upon Savanna la Mar, swept away the whole town in an instant, so that not a vestige of man, beast, or habitation, was seen upon the surface.†

Houses and works of art in alluvial deposits.—A very ancient subterranean town, apparently of Hindoo origin, was discovered in India in 1833, in digging the Doab canal. Its site is north of Saharunpore, near the town of Behat, and 17 feet below the present surface of the country. More than 170 coins of silver and copper have already been found, and many articles in metal and earthenware. The overlying deposit consisted of about five feet of river sand, with a substratum, about twelve feet thick, of red alluvial clay. In the neighbourhood are several rivers and torrents, which descend from the mountains charged with vast quantities of mud, sand, and shingle; and within the memory of persons now living the modern Behat has been threatened by an inundation, which after retreating left the neighbouring country strewed over with a superficial covering of sand several feet thick. In sinking wells in the environs, masses of shingle and boulders have been reached resembling those now in the river-channels of the same district, under a deposit of 30 feet of reddish loam. Captain Cautley, therefore, who directed the excavations, supposes that the matter discharged by torrents has gradually raised the whole country skirting the base of the lower hills; and that the ancient town, having been originally built in a hollow, was submerged by floods, and covered over with sediment 17 feet in thickness.‡

We are informed, by M. Boblaye, that in the Morea, the formation termed *céramique*, consisting of pottery, tiles, and bricks, intermixed

* Dodsley's Ann. Regist., 1788.

† Edwards, Hist. of West Indies, vol. i. p. 235, ed. 1801.

‡ Journ. of Asiat. Soc., Nos. xxv. and xxix.—1834.

with various works of art, enters so largely into the alluvium and vegetable soil upon the plains of Greece, and into hard and crystalline breccias which have been formed at the foot of declivities, that it constitutes an important stratum which might, in the absence of zoological characters, serve to mark our epoch in a most indestructible manner.*

Landslips.—The landslip, by suddenly precipitating large masses of rock and soil into a valley, overwhelms a multitude of animals, and sometimes buries permanently whole villages, with their inhabitants and large herds of cattle. Thus three villages, with their entire population, were covered, when the mountain of Piz fell in 1772, in the district of Treviso, in the state of Venice;† and part of Mount Grenier, south of Chambéry, in Savoy, which fell down in the year 1248, buried five parishes, including the town and church of St. André, the ruins occupying an extent of about nine square miles.‡

The number of lives lost by the slide of the Rossberg, in Switzerland, in 1806, was estimated at more than 800, a great number of the bodies, as well as several villages and scattered houses, being buried deep under mud and rock. In the same country, several hundred cottages, with eighteen of their inhabitants and a great number of cows, goats, and sheep, were victims to the sudden fall of a bed of stones, thirty yards deep, which descended from the summits of the Diablerets. In the year 1618, a portion of Mont Conto fell, in the county of Chiavenna in Switzerland, and buried the town of Pleurs with all its inhabitants, to the number of 2430.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples of similar local catastrophes, which, however numerous they may have been in mountainous parts of Europe, within the historical period, have been, nevertheless, of rare occurrence when compared to events of the same kind which have taken place in regions convulsed by earthquakes. It is then that enormous masses of rock and earth, even in comparatively low and level countries, are detached from the sides of valleys, and cast down into the river-courses, and often so unexpectedly that they overwhelm, even in the daytime, every living thing upon the plains.

Preservation of Organic Remains in Fissures and Caves.

In the history of earthquakes it was shown that many hundreds of new fissures and chasms had opened in certain regions during the last 150 years, some of which are described as being of unfathomable depth. We also perceive that mountain masses have been violently fractured and dislocated,

* Ann. des Sci. Nat., tome xxii. p. 117. Feb. 1831.

† Malte-Brun's Geog., vol. i. p. 435.

‡ Bakewell, Travels in the Tarentaise, vol. i. p. 201.

during their rise above the level of the sea ; and thus we may account for the existence of many cavities in the interior of the earth by the simple agency of earthquakes ; but there are some caverns, especially in limestone rocks, which, although usually, if not always, connected with rents, are nevertheless of such forms and dimensions, alternately expanding into spacious chambers, and then contracting again into narrow passages, that it is difficult to conceive that they can owe their origin to the mere fracturing and displacement of solid masses.

In the limestone of Kentucky, in the basin of Green River, one of the tributaries of the Ohio, a line of underground cavities has been traced in one direction for a distance of ten miles, without any termination ; and one of the chambers, of which there are many, all connected by narrow tunnels, is no less than ten acres in area, and 150 feet in its greatest height. Besides the principal series of "antres vast," there are a great many lateral embranchments not yet explored.*

The cavernous structure here alluded to is not altogether confined to calcareous rocks ; for it has lately been observed in micaceous and argillaceous schist, in the Grecian island of Thermia (Cythnos of the ancients), one of the Cyclades. Here also spacious halls with rounded and irregular walls, are connected together by narrow passages or tunnels, and there are many lateral branches which have no outlet. A current of water has evidently at some period flowed through the whole, and left a muddy deposit of bluish clay upon the floor ; but the erosive action of the stream cannot be supposed to have given rise to the excavations in the first instance. M. Virlet suggests that fissures were first caused by earthquakes, and that these fissures became the chimneys or vents for the disengagement of gas, generated below by volcanic heat. Gases, he observes, such as the muriatic, sulphuric, fluoric, and others, might, if raised to a high temperature, alter and decompose the rocks which they traverse. There are signs of the former action of such vapours in rents of the micaceous schist of Thermia, and thermal springs now issue from the grottos of that island. We may suppose that afterwards the elements of the decomposed rocks were gradually removed in a state of solution by mineral waters ; a theory which, according to M. Virlet, is confirmed by the effect of heated gases which escape from rents in the isthmus of Corinth, and which have greatly altered and corroded the hard siliceous and jaspitious rocks.†

When we reflect on the quantity of carbonate of lime annually poured out by mineral waters, we are prepared to admit that large cavities must, in the course of ages, be formed at considerable depths below the surface in calcareous rocks.‡ These rocks, it will be remembered, are at once

* Mem. by Nahum Ward, Trans. of Antiq. Soc. of Massachusetts. Holmes's Un. States, p. 438.

† Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. ii. p. 329.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 197.

more soluble, more permeable, and more fragile, than any others, at least all the compact varieties are very easily broken by the movements of earthquakes, which would produce only flexures in argillaceous strata. Fissures once formed in limestone are not liable, as in many other formations, to become closed up by impervious clayey matter, and hence a stream of acidulous water might for ages obtain a free and unobstructed passage.*

Morea.—After these observations on the possible origin of some subterranean hollows, I shall next consider in what manner they may be filled up with mud, pebbles, and other substances. When a mass of cavernous rock is raised above the level of the sea, it will usually be intersected by ravines and valleys, and it must then happen that here and there a torrent or river will break into some cavern. Accordingly, engulfed streams occur in almost every region of cavernous limestone, as in the north of England, for example; but in no district are they more conspicuous than in the Morea, where the phenomena attending them have been lately studied and described in great detail by M. Boblaye and his fellow-labourers of the French expedition to Greece.† From his account it appears that numerous caverns are there found in a compact limestone, of the age of the English chalk, immediately below which are arenaceous strata referred to the period of our green sand. In the more elevated districts of that peninsula there are many deep land-locked valleys, or basins, closed round on all sides by mountains of fissured and cavernous limestone. The year is divided almost as distinctly as between the tropics into a rainy season, which lasts upwards of four months, and a season of drought of nearly eight months' duration. When the torrents are swollen by the rains, they rush from surrounding heights into the inclosed basins; but, instead of giving rise to lakes, as would be the case in most other countries, they are received into gulfs or chasms, called by the Greeks "*Katavothra*," and which correspond to what are termed "swallow holes" in the north of England. The water of these torrents is charged with pebbles and red ochreous earth, resembling precisely the well-known cement of the osseous breccias of the Mediterranean. It dissolves in acids with effervescence, and leaves a residue of hydrated oxide of iron, granular iron, impalpable grains of siliceous, and small crystals of quartz. Soil of the same description abounds every where on the surface of the decomposing limestone in Greece, that rock containing in it much siliceous and ferruginous matter.

Many of the *Katavothra* being insufficient to give passage to all the water in the rainy season, a temporary lake is formed round the mouth of the chasm, which then becomes still farther obstructed by pebbles, sand, and red mud, thrown down from the turbid waters. The lake being thus

* See some remarks by M. Boblaye, *Ann. des Mines*, 3me série, tom. iv.

† See *Ann. des Mines*, 3me série, tom. iv. 1833.

raised, its waters generally escape through other openings, at higher levels, around the borders of the plain, constituting the bottom of the closed basin.

In some places, as at Kavaros and Tripolitza, where the principal discharge is by a gulf in the middle of the plain, nothing can be seen over the opening in summer, when the lake dries up, but a deposit of red mud, cracked in all directions. But the Katavothron is more commonly situated at the foot of the surrounding escarpment of limestone; and in that case there is sometimes room enough to allow a person to enter, in summer, and even to penetrate far into the interior. Within is seen a suite of chambers, communicating with each other by narrow passages; and M. Virlet relates, that in one instance he observed, near the entrance, human bones imbedded in recent red mud, mingled with the remains of plants and animals of species now inhabiting the Morea. It is not wonderful, he says, that the bones of man should be met with in such receptacles; for so murderous have been the late wars in Greece, that skeletons are often seen lying exposed on the surface of the country.*

In summer, when no water is flowing into the Katavothron, its mouth, half clothed up with red mud, is masked by a vigorous vegetation, which is cherished by the moisture of the place. It is then the favourite hiding-place and den of foxes and jackals; so that the same cavity serves at one season of the year for the habitation of carnivorous beasts, and at another as the channel of an engulfed river. Near the mouth of one chasm, M. Boblaye and his companions saw the carcass of a horse, in part devoured, the size of which seemed to have prevented the jackals from dragging it in: the marks of their teeth were observed on the bones, and it was evident that the floods of the ensuing winter would wash in whatsoever might remain of the skeleton.

It has been stated that the waters of all these torrents of the Morea are turbid where they are engulfed; but when they come out again, often at the distance of many leagues, they are perfectly clear and limpid, being only charged occasionally with a slight quantity of calcareous sand. The points of efflux are usually near the sea-shores of the Morea, but sometimes they are submarine; and when this is the case, the sands are seen to boil up for a considerable space, and the surface of the sea, in calm weather, swells in large convex waves. It is curious to reflect, that when this discharge fails in seasons of drought, the sea may break into subterranean caverns, and carry in marine sand and shells, to be mingled with ossiferous mud, and the remains of terrestrial animals.

In general, however, the efflux of water at these inferior openings is surprisingly uniform. It seems, therefore, that the large caverns in the interior must serve as reservoirs, and that the water escapes gradually

* Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. iii. p. 223.

from them in consequence of the smallness of the rents and passages by which they communicate with the surface.

The phenomena above described are not confined to the Morea, but occur in Greece generally, and in those parts of Italy, Spain, Asia Minor, and Syria, where the formations of the Morea extend. When speaking of the numerous fissures in the limestone of Greece, M. Boblaye reminds us of the famous earthquake of 469 B. C., when, as we learn from Cicero, Plutarch, Strabo, and Pliny, Sparta was laid in ruins, part of the summit of Mount Taygetus torn off, and numerous gulfs and fissures caused in the rocks of Laconia.

During the great earthquake of 1693, in Sicily, several thousand people were at once entombed in the ruins of caverns in limestone, at Sortino Vecchio; and, at the same time, a large stream, which had issued for ages from one of the grottos below that town, changed suddenly its subterranean course, and came out from the mouth of a cave lower down the valley, where no water had previously flowed. To this new point the ancient water-mills were transferred.*

When the courses of engulfed rivers are thus liable to change, from time to time, by alterations in the levels of a country, and by the rending and shattering of mountain masses, we must suppose that the dens of wild beasts will sometimes be inundated by subterranean floods, and their carcases buried under heaps of alluvium. The bones, moreover, of individuals which have died in the recesses of caves, or of animals which have been carried in for prey, may be drifted along, and mixed up with mud, sand, and fragments of rocks, so as to form osseous breccias.

But it is not merely in spots where streams are engulfed that the bones of animals may be collected in rents and caverns, for open fissures often serve as natural pit-falls in which herbivorous animals perish. This may happen the more readily when they are chased by beasts of prey, or when surprised while carelessly browsing on the shrubs which so often overgrow and conceal the edges of fissures.†

During the excavations recently made near Behat in India, the bones of two deer were found at the bottom of an ancient well which had been filled up with alluvial loam. Their horns were broken to pieces, but the jaw bones and other parts of the skeleton remained tolerably perfect. "Their presence," says Capt. Cautley, "is easily accounted for, as a great number of these and other animals are constantly lost in galloping over the jungles and among the high grass by falling into deserted wells."‡

Above the village of Selside, near Ingleborough in Yorkshire, a chasm

* I learnt this from some inhabitants of Sortino, in 1820, and visited the points alluded to.

† Buckland, *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*, p. 25.

‡ See ante, p. 124, and places cited there.

of enormous but unknown depth occurs in the scar-limestone, a member of the carboniferous series. "The chasm," says Professor Sedgwick, "is surrounded by grassy shelving banks, and many animals, tempted towards its brink, have fallen down and perished in it. The approach of cattle is now prevented by a strong lofty wall; but there can be no doubt that, during the last two or three thousand years, great masses of bony breccia must have accumulated in the lower parts of the great fissure, which probably descends through the whole thickness of the scar-limestone, to the depth of perhaps five or six hundred feet.*

When any of these natural pit-falls happen to communicate with lines of subterranean caverns, the bones, earth, and breccia, may sink by their own weight, or be washed into the vaults below.

We have seen that the ravines which opened in Calabria, in 1783, were very numerous, varying in their ordinary depth from fifty to two hundred feet, and that animals were sometimes engulfed during the shocks.† If a torrent chance to be in the line of any of these chasms, it might pour in a quantity of alluvial matter under which the animal remains might lie inhumed for ages. Where houses with their inhabitants have been swallowed up in fissures, there appears to have been usually a sliding in of all the loose matter which lay upon the surface; so that, in such rents, we might look for the ruins of buildings, and the skeletons of men and animals, buried in alluvium at the depth often of several hundred feet.

At the north extremity of the rock of Gibraltar are perpendicular fissures, on the ledges of which a number of hawks nestle and rear their young in the breeding season. They throw down from their nests the bones of small birds, mice, and other animals on which they feed, and these are gradually united into a breccia of angular fragments of the decomposing limestone with a cement of red earth.

At the pass of Escrinet in France, on the northern escarpment of the Coiron hills, near Aubenas, I have seen a breccia in the act of forming. Small pieces of disintegrating limestone are transported, during heavy rains, by a streamlet, to the foot of the declivity, where land shells are very abundant. The shells and pieces of stone soon become cemented together by stalagmite into a compact mass, and the talus thus formed is in one place fifty feet deep, and five hundred yards wide. So firmly is the lowest portion consolidated, that it is quarried for millstones.

I have lately had an opportunity of examining the most celebrated caves of Franconia, and among others that of Rabenstein, newly discovered. Their general form, and the nature and arrangement of their con-

* Memoir on the Structure of the Lake Mountains of the North of England, &c. read before the Geological Society, Jan. 5, 1831.

† Vol. I. p. 400.

tents, appeared to me to agree perfectly with the notion of their having once served as the channels of subterraneous rivers. This mode of accounting for the introduction of transported matter into the Franconian and other caves, filled up as they often are even to their roofs with osseous breccia, was long ago proposed by M. C. Prevost,* and seems at length to be very generally adopted. But I do not doubt that bears inhabited some of the German caves, or that the cavern of Kirkdale, in Yorkshire, was once the den of hyænas. The abundance of bony dung, associated with hyænas' bones, has been pointed out by Dr. Buckland, and with reason, as confirmatory of this opinion.

Alternations of stalagmite and alluvium.—The same author observed in every cave examined by him in Germany that deposits of mud and sand, with or without rolled pebbles and angular fragments of rock, were covered over with a *single* crust of stalagmite.† In the English caves he remarked a similar absence of *alternations* of alluvium and stalagmite. But Dr. Schmerling has discovered in a cavern at Chockier, about two leagues from Liège, three distinct beds of stalagmite, and between each of them a mass of breccia, and mud mixed with quartz pebbles, and in the three deposits the bones of extinct quadrupeds.‡

This exception does not invalidate the generality of the phenomenon pointed out by Dr. Buckland, one cause of which may perhaps be this, that if several floods pass at different intervals of time through a subterranean passage, the last, if it has power to drift along fragments of rock, will also tear up any alternating stalagmitic and alluvial beds that may have been previously formed. Another cause may be, that a particular line of caverns will rarely be so situated, in relation to the lowest levels of a country, as to become, at two distinct epochs, the receptacle of engulfed rivers; and if this should happen, some of the caves, or at least the tunnels of communication, may at the first period be entirely choked up with transported matter, so as not to allow the subsequent passage of water in the same direction.

As the same chasms may remain open throughout periods of indefinite duration, the species inhabiting a country may in the meantime be greatly changed, and thus the remains of animals belonging to very different epochs may become mingled together in a common tomb. For this reason it is often difficult to separate the monuments of the human epoch from those relating to periods long antecedent, and it was not without great care and skill that Dr. Buckland was enabled to guard against such anachronisms in his investigation of several of the English caves. He mentions that human skeletons were found in the cave of Wokey Hole,

* *Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris*, tom. iv.

† *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*, p. 108.

‡ *Journ. de Géol.*, tom. i. p. 286. July, 1830.

near Wells, in the Mendips, dispersed through reddish mud and clay, and some of them united by stalagmite into a firm osseous breccia. "The spot on which they lie is within reach of the highest floods of the adjacent river, and the mud in which they are buried is evidently fluvatile."*

In speaking of the cave of Paviland on the coast of Glamorganshire, the same author states that the entire mass through which bones were dispersed appeared to have been disturbed by ancient diggings, so that the remains of extinct animals had become mixed with recent bones and shells. In the same cave was a human skeleton, and the remains of recent testacea of eatable species, which may have been carried in by man.

In several caverns on the banks of the Meuse, near Liège, Dr. Schmerling has found human bones in the same mud and breccia with those of the elephant, rhinoceros, bear, and other quadrupeds of extinct species. He has observed none of the dung of any of these animals; and from this circumstance, and the appearance of the mud and pebbles, he concludes that these caverns were never inhabited by wild beasts, but washed in by a current of water. As the human skulls and bones were in fragments, and no entire skeleton had been found, he does not believe that these caves were places of sepulture, but that the human remains were washed in at the same time as the bones of extinct quadrupeds.

Caverns in the South of France.—Similar associations in the south of France, of human bones and works of art with remains of extinct quadrupeds, have induced some geologists to maintain that man was an inhabitant of that part of Europe before the rhinoceros, hyæna, tiger, and other fossil species disappeared. I may first mention the cavern of Bize, in the department of Aude, where M. Marcel de Serres met with a small number of human bones mixed with those of extinct animals and with land shells. They occur in a calcareous stony mass, bound together by a cement of stalagmite. On examining the same caverns, M. Tournal found, not only in these calcareous beds, but also in a black mud which overlies a red osseous mud, several human teeth, together with broken angular fragments of a rude kind of pottery, and also recent marine and terrestrial shells. The teeth preserve their enamel, but the fangs are so much altered as to adhere strongly when applied to the tongue. Of the terrestrial shells thus associated with the bones and pottery, the most common are *Cyclostoma elegans*, *Bulimus decollatus*, *Helix nemoralis*, and *H. nitida*. Among the marine are found *Pecten jacobæus*, *Mytilus edulis*, and *Natica mille-punctata*, all of them eatable kinds, and which may have been brought there for food. Bones were found in the same mass belonging to three new species of deer, an extinct bear (*Ursus arctoïdeus*) and the wild bull (*Bos urus*), formerly a native of Germany.†

* Reliquiæ Diluvianæ, p. 165.

† M. Marcel de Serres, *Géognosie des Terrains Tertiaires*, p. 64. Introduction.

In the same part of France, M. de Christol has found in caverns in a tertiary limestone at Pondres and Souvignargues, two leagues north of Lunel-viel, in the department of Herault, human bones and pottery confusedly mixed with remains of the rhinoceros, bear, hyæna, and other terrestrial mammifers. They were imbedded in alluvial mud, of the solidity of calcareous tufa, and containing some flint pebbles and fragments of the limestone of the country. Beneath this mixed accumulation, which sometimes attained a thickness of thirteen feet, is the original floor of the cavern, about a foot thick, covered with bones and the dung of animals (*album græcum*), in a sandy and tufaceous cement.

The human bones in these caverns of Pondres and Souvignargues were found, upon a careful analysis, to have parted with their animal matter to as great a degree as those of the hyæna which accompany them, and are equally brittle, and adhere as strongly to the tongue.

In order to compare the degree of alteration of these bones with those known to be of high antiquity, M. Marcel de Serres, and M. Ballard, chemists of Montpellier, procured some from a Gaulish sarcophagus in the plain of Lunel, supposed to have been buried for fourteen or fifteen centuries at least. In these the cellular tissue was empty, but they were more solid than fresh bones. They did not adhere to the tongue in the same manner as those of the caverns of Bize and Pondres, yet they had lost at least three-fourths of their original animal matter.

The superior solidity of the Gaulish bones to those in a fresh skeleton is a fact in perfect accordance with the observations made by Mr. Mantell on bones taken from a Saxon tumulus near Lewes.

M. Teissier has also described a cavern near Mialet, in the department of Gard, where the remains of the bear and other animals were mingled confusedly with human bones, coarse pottery, teeth pierced for amulets, pointed fragments of bone, bracelets of bronze, and a Roman urn. Part of this deposit reached to the roof of the cavity, and adhered firmly to it. The author suggests that the exterior portion of the grotto may at one period have been a den of bears, and that afterwards the aboriginal inhabitants of the country took possession of it either for a dwelling or a burial place, and left there the coarse pottery, amulets, and pointed pieces of bone. At a third period the Romans may have used the cavern as a place of sepulture or concealment, and to them may have belonged the urn and bracelets of metal. If we then suppose the course of the neighbouring river to be impeded by some temporary cause, a flood would be occasioned, which, rushing into the open grotto, may have washed all the remains into the interior caves and tunnels, heaping the whole confusedly together.*

In the controversy which has arisen on this subject MM. Marcel de

* Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. ii. pp. 56—63.

Serres, De Christol, Tournal, and others, have contended, that the phenomena of this and other caverns in the south of France prove that the fossil rhinoceros, hyæna, bear, and several other lost species, were once contemporaneous inhabitants of the country, together with man ; while M. Desnoyers has supported the opposite opinion. The flint hatchets and arrow heads, he says, and the pointed bones and coarse pottery of many French and English caves, agree precisely in character with those found in the tumuli, and under the dolmens (rude altars of unhewn stone) of the primitive inhabitants of Gaul, Britain, and Germany. The human bones, therefore, in the caves which are associated with such fabricated objects, must belong not to antediluvian periods, but to a people in the same stage of civilization as those who constructed the tumuli and altars.

In the Gaulish monuments, we find, together with the objects of industry above mentioned, the bones of wild and domestic animals of species now inhabiting Europe, particularly of deer, sheep, wild boars, dogs, horses, and oxen. This fact has been ascertained in Quercy, and other provinces ; and it is supposed by antiquaries, that the animals in question were placed beneath the Celtic altars in memory of sacrifices offered to the Gaulish divinity Hesus, and in the tombs to commemorate funeral repasts, and also from a superstition prevalent among savage nations, which induces them to lay up provisions for the manes of the dead in a future life. But in none of these ancient monuments have any bones been found of the elephant, rhinoceros, hyæna, tiger, and other quadrupeds, such as are found in caves, as might certainly have been expected, had these species continued to flourish at the time that this part of Gaul was inhabited by man.*

We are also reminded by M. Desnoyers of a passage in Florus, in which it is related that Cæsar ordered the caves into which the Aquitanian Gauls had retreated to be closed up.† It is also on record, that so late as the eighth century, the Aquitanians defended themselves in caverns against King Pepin. As many of these caverns, therefore, may have served in succession as temples and habitations, as places of sepulture, concealment, or defence, it is easy to conceive that human bones, and those of animals, in osseous breccias of much older date, may have been swept away together, by inundations, and then buried in one promiscuous heap.

It is not on the evidence of such intermixtures that we ought readily to admit either the high antiquity of the human race, or the recent date of certain lost species of quadrupeds.

* Desnoyers, Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. ii. p.252.

† Hist. Rom. Epit., lib. iii. c. 10.

CHAPTER XV.

IMBEDDING OF ORGANIC REMAINS IN SUBAQUEOUS DEPOSITS.

Division of the subject—Imbedding of terrestrial animals and plants—Increased specific gravity of wood sunk to great depths in the sea—Drift timber of the Mackenzie in Slave Lake and Polar Sea—Floating trees in the Mississippi (p. 138.)—In the Gulf stream—On the coast of Iceland, Spitzbergen, and Labrador—Submarine forests—Example on coast of Hampshire—Origin of a submarine forest (p. 141.)—Imbedding of the remains of insects—Of reptiles—Bones of birds why rare—Imbedding of terrestrial quadrupeds by river-floods—Skeletons in recent shell marl (p. 145.)—Imbedding of mammiferous remains in marine strata.

Division of the subject.—HAVING treated of the imbedding of organic remains in deposits formed upon the land, I shall next consider the including of the same in deposits formed under water.

It will be convenient to divide this branch of our subject into three parts ; considering, first, the various modes whereby the relics of *terrestrial* species may be buried in subaqueous formations ; secondly, the modes whereby animals and plants inhabiting *fresh water* may be so entombed ; thirdly, how *marine* species may become preserved in new strata.

The phenomena above enumerated demand a fuller share of attention than those previously examined, since the deposits which originate upon dry land are insignificant in thickness, superficial extent, and durability, when contrasted with those of subaqueous origin. At the same time, the study of the latter is beset with greater difficulties ; for we are here concerned with the results of processes much farther removed from the sphere of ordinary observation. There is, indeed, no circumstance which so seriously impedes the acquisition of just views in our science as an habitual disregard of the important fact, that the reproductive effects of the principal agents of change are confined to another element—to that larger portion of the globe, from which, by our very organization, we are almost entirely excluded.*

Imbedding of Terrestrial Plants.

When a tree falls into a river from the undermining of the banks, or from being washed in by a torrent or flood, it floats on the surface, not because the woody portion is specifically lighter than water, but because it is full of pores containing air. When soaked for a considerable time,

* See Book I. ch. v.

the water makes its way into these pores, and the wood becomes *water-logged* and sinks. The time required for this process varies in different woods; but several kinds may be drifted to great distances, sometimes across the ocean, before they lose their buoyancy.

Wood sunk to a great depth in the sea.—If wood be sunk to vast depths in the sea, it may be impregnated with water suddenly. Captain Scoresby informs us, in his *Account on the Arctic Regions*,* that on one occasion a whale, on being harpooned, ran out all the lines in the boat, which it then dragged under water, to the depth of several thousand feet, the men having just time to escape to a piece of ice. When the fish returned to the surface “to blow,” it was struck a second time, and soon afterwards killed. The moment it expired it began to sink,—an unusual circumstance, which was found to be caused by the weight of the sunken boat, which still remained attached to it. By means of harpoons and ropes the fish was prevented from sinking, until it was released from the weight by connecting a rope to the lines of the attached boat, which was no sooner done than the fish rose again to the surface. The sunken boat was then hauled up with great labour; for so heavy was it, that although before the accident it would have been buoyant when full of water, yet it now required a boat at each end to keep it from sinking. “When it was hoisted into the ship, the paint came off the wood in large sheets; and the planks, which were of wainscot, were as completely soaked in every pore as if they had lain at the bottom of the sea since the flood! A wooden apparatus that accompanied the boat in its progress through the deep, consisting chiefly of a piece of thick deal, about fifteen inches square, happened to fall overboard, and, though it originally consisted of the lightest fir, sank in the water like a stone. The boat was rendered useless: even the wood of which it was built, on being offered to the cook for fuel, was tried and rejected as incombustible.”†

Captain Scoresby found that, by sinking pieces of fir, elm, ash, &c., to the depth of four thousand and sometimes six thousand feet, they became impregnated with sea-water, and when drawn up again, after immersion, for an hour, would no longer float. The effect of this impregnation was to increase the dimensions as well as the specific gravity of the wood, every solid inch having increased one-twentieth in size and twenty-one twenty-fifths in weight.‡

Drift wood of the Mackenzie River.—When timber is drifted down by a river, it is often arrested by lakes: and, becoming water-logged, it may sink and be imbedded in lacustrine strata, if any be there forming: sometimes a portion floats on till it reaches the sea. In the course of the Mackenzie River, we have an example of vast accumulations of vegetable matter now in progress under both these circumstances.

* Vol. II. p. 191.

† *Account of the Arctic Regions*, vol. ii. p. 193.

‡ *Account of the Arctic Regions*, vol. ii. p. 202.

In Slave Lake in particular, which vies in dimensions with some of the great fresh-water seas of Canada, the quantity of drift-timber brought down annually is enormous. "As the trees," says Doctor Richardson, "retain their roots, which are often loaded with earth and stones, they readily sink, especially when water-soaked; and, accumulating in the eddies, form shoals, which ultimately augment into islands. A thicket of small willows covers the new-formed island as soon as it appears above water, and their fibrous roots serve to bind the whole firmly together. Sections of these islands are annually made by the river, assisted by the frost; and it is interesting to study the diversity of appearances they present, according to their different ages. The trunks of the trees gradually decay until they are converted into a blackish brown substance resembling peat, but which still retains more or less of the fibrous structure of the wood; and layers of this often alternate with layers of clay and sand, the whole being penetrated, to the depth of four or five yards or more, by the long fibrous roots of the willows. A deposition of this kind, with the aid of a little infiltration of bituminous matter, would produce an excellent imitation of coal, with vegetable impressions of the willow-roots. What appeared most remarkable was the horizontal slaty structure that the older alluvial banks presented, or the *regular curve* that the strata assumed from unequal subsidence.

"It was in the rivers only that we could observe sections of these deposits; but the same operation goes on on a much more magnificent scale in the lakes. A shoal of many miles in extent is formed on the south side of Athabasca Lake, by the drift-timber and vegetable debris brought down by the Elk River; and the Slave Lake itself must in process of time be filled up by the matters daily conveyed into it from Slave River. Vast quantities of drift-timber are buried under the sand at the mouth of the river, and enormous piles of it are accumulated on the shores of every part of the lake."*

The banks of the Mackenzie display almost every where horizontal beds of wood coal, alternating with bituminous clay, gravel, sand, and friable sandstone; sections, in short, of such deposits as are now evidently forming at the bottom of the lakes which it traverses.

Notwithstanding the vast forests intercepted by the lakes, a still greater mass of drift wood is found where the Mackenzie reaches the sea, in a latitude where no wood grows at present except a few stunted willows. At the mouths of the river the alluvial matter has formed a barrier of islands and shoals, where we may expect a great formation of coal at some distant period.

The abundance of floating timber on the Mackenzie is owing, as Dr. Richardson informs me, to the direction and to the length of the course of

* Dr. Richardson's Geognost. Obs. on Capt. Franklin's Polar Expedition.

this river, which runs from south to north, so that the sources of the stream lie in much warmer latitudes than its mouths. In the country, therefore, where the sources are situated, the frost breaks up at an earlier season, while yet the waters in the lower part of its course are ice-bound. Hence the current of water, rushing down northward, reaches a point where the thaw has not begun, and, finding the channel of the river blocked up with ice, it overflows the banks, sweeping through forests of pines, and carrying away thousands of uprooted trees.

Drift-wood of the Mississippi.—I have already observed that the navigation of the Mississippi is much impeded by trunks of trees half sunk in the river.* On reaching the Gulf of Mexico many of them subside, and are imbedded in the new strata which form the delta, but many of them float on and enter the Gulf stream. “Tropical plants (says M. Constant Prevost) are taken up by this great current, and carried in a northerly direction till they reach the shores of Iceland and Spitzbergen uninjured. A great portion of them are doubtless arrested on their passage, and probably always in the same inlets, or the same spots on the bottom of the ocean; in fact, wherever an eddy or calm determines their distribution, which, in this single example, extends over a space comprehended between the equator and the eightieth degree of latitude—an immense space, six times more considerable than that occupied by all Europe, and thirty times larger than France. The drifting of various substances, though regular, is not continual: it takes place by intermittance after great inundations of rivers, and in the intervals the waters may carry sand only, or mud, or each of these alternately, to the same localities.”†

Drift-timber on coasts of Iceland, Spitzbergen, &c.—The ancient forests of Iceland, observes Malte-Brun, have been improvidently exhausted; but, although the Icelandic can obtain no timber from the land, he is supplied with it abundantly by the ocean. An immense quantity of thick trunks of pines, firs, and other trees, are thrown upon the northern coast of the island, especially upon North Cape and Cape Langaness, and are then carried by the waves along these two promontories to other parts of the coast, so as to afford sufficiency of wood for fuel and for constructing boats. Timber is also carried to the shores of Labrador and Greenland; and Crantz assures us that the masses of floating wood thrown by the waves upon the island of John de Mayen often equal the whole of that island in extent.‡

In a similar manner the bays of Spitzbergen are filled with drift-wood, which accumulates also upon those parts of the coast of Siberia that are exposed to the east, consisting of larch trees, pines, Siberian cedars, firs,

* Vol. I. p. 183.

† Mém. de la Soc. d’Hist. Nat. de Paris, vol. iv. p. 84.

‡ Malte-Brun, Geog., vol. v. part i. p. 112.—Crantz, Hist. of Greenland, tome i. pp. 50—54.

and Fernambucco and Campeachy woods. These trunks appear to have been swept away by the great rivers of Asia and America. Some of them are brought from the Gulf of Mexico, by the Bahama stream; while others are hurried forward by the current which, to the north of Siberia, constantly sets in from east to west. Some of these trees have been deprived of their bark by friction, but are in such a state of preservation as to form excellent building timber.* Parts of the branches and almost all the roots remain fixed to the pines which have been drifted into the North Sea, into latitudes too cold for the growth of such timber, but the trunks are usually barked.

The leaves and lighter parts of plants are seldom carried out to sea, in any part of the globe, except during tropical hurricanes among islands, and during the agitations of the atmosphere which sometimes accompany earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.†

Comparative number of living and fossilized species of plants.—It will appear from these observations that, although the remains of terrestrial vegetation, borne down by aqueous causes from the land, are chiefly deposited at the bottom of lakes or at the mouths of rivers, yet a considerable quantity is drifted about in all directions by currents, and may become imbedded in any *marine* formation, or may sink down, when water-logged, to the bottom of unfathomable abysses, and there accumulate without intermixture of other substances.

It may be asked whether we have any data for inferring that the remains of a considerable proportion of the existing species of plants will be permanently preserved, so as to be hereafter recognisable, supposing the strata now in progress to be at some future period upraised? To this inquiry it may be answered, that there are no reasons for expecting that more than a small number of the plants now flourishing in the globe will become fossilized; since the entire habitations of a great number of them are remote from lakes and seas, and even where they grow near to large bodies of water, the circumstances are quite accidental and partial which favour the imbedding and conservation of vegetable remains. Suppose, for example, that the species of plants inhabiting the hydrographical basin of the Rhine, or that region, extending from the Alps to the sea, which is watered by the Rhine and its numerous tributaries, to be about 2500 in number, exclusive of the cryptogamic class. This estimate is by no means exaggerated; yet if a geologist could explore the deposits which have resulted from the sediment of the Rhine in the lake of Constance, and off the coast of Holland, he might scarcely be able to obtain from the recent strata the leaves, wood, and seeds of *fifty* species in such a state of preservation as to enable a botanist to determine their specific characters with certainty.

* Olafsen, Voyage to Iceland, tome i. Malte-Brun's Geog., vol. v. part i. p. 112.

† De la Beche, Geol. Manual, p. 477.

Those naturalists, therefore, who infer that the ancient flora of the globe was, at certain periods, less varied than now, merely because they have as yet discovered only a few hundred fossil species of a particular epoch, while they can enumerate more than fifty thousand living ones, are reasoning on a false basis, and their standard of comparison is not the same in the two cases.

Submarine forests.—I have already hinted, that the explanation of some of these may be sought in the encroachments of the sea, in estuaries, and the varying level of the tides, at distant periods on the same parts of our coasts;* but some of them, perhaps, may be due to subsidence caused by earthquakes.

It has been observed, by Dr. Fleming, that the roots of the trees, in several submarine forests in Scotland, are in lacustrine silt. The stumps of the trees evidently occupy the position in which they formerly grew, and are sometimes from eight to ten feet below high-water mark. The horizontality of the strata, and other circumstances, preclude the supposition of a slide; he has, therefore, attributed the depression, with much probability, to the drainage of peaty soil, on the removal of a seaward barrier. Suppose a lake, separated from the sea by a chain of sand hills, to become a marsh, and a stratum of vegetable matter to be formed on the surface, of sufficient density to support trees. Let the outlet of the marsh be elevated a few feet only above the rise of the tide. All the strata below the level of the outlet would be kept constantly wet, or in a semifluid state; but if the tides rise in the estuary, and the sea encroaches, portions of the gained lands are swept away, and the extremities of the alluvial and peaty strata, whereon the forest grew, are exposed to the sea, and at every ebb tide left dry to a depth equal to the increased fall of the tide. Much water, formerly prevented from escaping, now oozes out from the moist beds,—the strata collapse, and the surface of the morass, instead of remaining at its original height, sinks below the level of the sea.†

Submarine forest on coast of Hants, how formed.—Mr. Charles Harris discovered lately evident traces of a fir-wood, beneath the mean level of the sea, at Bournemouth, in Hampshire, the formation having been laid open during a low spring tide. It is composed of peat and wood, and is situated between the beach and a bar of sand about 200 yards off, and extends fifty yards along the shore. It also lies in the direct line of the Bournemouth Valley, from the termination of which it is separated by 200 yards of shingle and drift-sand. Down the valley flows a large brook, traversing near its mouth a considerable tract of rough, boggy, and heathy ground, which produces a few birch trees, and a great abundance of the *Myrica* gale. Seventy-six rings of annual growth were counted in a

* Vol. I. p. 254.

† See Memoirs by the Rev. Dr. Fleming, Trans. R. S. Edin., vol. ix. p. 419; and Quarterly Journ. of Sci., No. 13, new series.

transverse section of one of the buried fir trees, which was fourteen inches in diameter. Besides the stumps and roots of fir, pieces of alder and birch are found in the peat ; and it is a curious fact, that a part of many of the trees has been converted into iron pyrites. The peat rests on pebbly strata, precisely similar to the sand and pebbles occurring on the adjoining heaths.

As the sea is encroaching on this shore, we may suppose that at some former period the Bourne Valley extended farther, and that its extremity consisted, as at present, of boggy ground, partly clothed with fir-trees. The bog rested on that bed of pebbles which we now see below the peat ; and the sea, in its progressive encroachments, eventually laid bare, at low water, the sandy foundations ; upon which a stream of fresh water rushing through the sand at the fall of the tides, carried out loose sand with it. The superstratum of vegetable matter being matted and bound together by the roots of trees, remained ; but being undermined, sank down below the level of the sea, and then the waves washed sand and shingle over it. In support of this hypothesis, it may be observed, that small streams of fresh water often pass under the sands of the sea-beach, so that they may be crossed dry-shod ; and the water is seen, at the point where it issues, to carry out sand, and even pebbles.

Imbedding of the Remains of Insects.

I have observed the elytra and other parts of beetles in a band of fissile clay, separating two beds of recent shell-marl, in the Loch of Kinnordy in Forfarshire. Amongst these, Mr. Curtis recognised *Elater lineatus* and *Atopa cervina*, species still living in Scotland. These, as well as other remains which accompanied them, appear to belong to terrestrial, not aquatic, species, and must have been carried down in muddy water during an inundation. In the lacustrine peat of the same locality, the elytra of beetles are not uncommon ; but in the deposits of drained lakes generally, and in the silt of our estuaries, the relics of this class of the animal kingdom are rare. In the blue clay of very modern origin of Lewes levels, Mr. Mantell has found the *Indusia*, or cases of the larvæ of *Phryganea*, in abundance, with minute shells belonging to the genera *Planorbis*, *Limnea*, &c., adhering to them.*

When speaking of the migrations of insects, I pointed out that an immense number are floated into lakes and seas by rivers, or blown by winds far from the land ; but they are so buoyant that we can only suppose them, under very peculiar circumstances, to sink to the bottom before they are either devoured by insectivorous animals or decomposed.

* Trans. Geol. Soc., vol. iii. part i. p. 201, second series.

Remains of Reptiles.

As the bodies of several crocodiles were found in the mud brought down to the sea by the river inundation which attended an earthquake in Java in the year 1699, we may imagine that extraordinary floods of mud may stifle many individuals of the shoals of alligators and other reptiles which frequent lakes and the deltas of rivers in tropical climates. Thousands of frogs were found leaping about among the wreck carried into the sea by the late inundations in Morayshire;* and it is evident that whenever a sea-cliff is undermined, or land is swept by other violent causes into the sea, land reptiles may be carried in.

Remains of Birds.

We might have anticipated that the imbedding of the remains of birds in new strata would be of very rare occurrence, for their powers of flight insure them against perishing by numerous casualties to which quadrupeds are exposed during floods; and if they chance to be drowned, or to die when swimming on the water, it will scarcely ever happen that they will be submerged so as to become preserved in sedimenary deposits. In consequence of the hollow tubular structure of their bones and the quantity of their feathers, they are extremely light in proportion to their volume; so that when first killed they do not sink to the bottom like quadrupeds, but float on the surface until the carcass either rots away or is devoured by predaceous animals. To these causes we may ascribe the absence of any vestige of the bones of birds in the recent marl formations of Scotland; although these lakes, until the moment when they were artificially drained, were frequented by a great abundance of water-fowl.

Sir T. D. Lauder records that some aquatic birds were dashed to pieces by the impetuous waters of the Deveron, in Aberdeenshire, as they rushed through a narrow pass among the rocks during the floods of 1829.† In this manner torrents charged with mud may occasionally deposit the remains of birds in lacustrine strata.

Imbedding of Terrestrial Quadrupeds.

River inundations recur in most climates at very irregular intervals, and expend their fury on those rich alluvial plains, where herds of herbivorous quadrupeds congregate together. These animals are often surprised; and, being unable to stem the current, are hurried along until they are drowned, when they sink at first immediately to the bottom. Here their

* Sir T. D. Lauder's Account, second edition, p. 312.

† Account of the Great Floods, &c. second ed., p. 330.

bodies are drifted along, together with sediment, into lakes or seas, and may then be covered by a mass of mud, sand, and pebbles, thrown down upon them. If there be no sediment superimposed, the gases generated by putrefaction usually cause the bodies to rise again to the surface about the ninth, or at latest the fourteenth day. The pressure of a thin covering of mud would not be sufficient to retain them at the bottom; for we see the putrid carcasses of dogs and cats, even in rivers, floating with considerable weights attached to them, and in sea-water they would be still more buoyant.

Where the body is so buried in drift-sand, or mud accumulated upon it, as never to rise again, the skeleton may be preserved entire; but if it comes again to the surface while in the process of putrefaction, the bones commonly fall piecemeal from the floating carcass, and may in that case be scattered at random over the bottom of the lake, estuary, or sea; so that a jaw may afterwards be found in one place, a rib in another, a humerus in a third—all included, perhaps, in a matrix of fine materials, where there may be evidence of very slight transporting power in the current, or even of none, but simply of some chemical precipitate.

A large number of the bodies of drowned animals, if they float into the sea or a lake, especially in hot climates, are instantly devoured by sharks, alligators, and other carnivorous beasts, which may have power to digest even the bones; but during extraordinary floods, when the greatest number of land animals are destroyed, the waters are commonly so turbid, especially at the bottom of the channel, that even aquatic species are compelled to escape into some retreat where there is clearer water, lest they should be stifled. For this reason, as well as the rapidity of sedimentary deposition at such seasons, the probability of carcasses becoming permanently imbedded is considerable.

Flood in the Solway Firth, 1794.—One of the most memorable floods of modern date, in our island, is that which visited part of the southern borders of Scotland, on the 24th of January, 1794, and which spread particular devastation over the country adjoining the Solway Firth.

We learn from the account of Captain Napier, that the heavy rains had swollen every stream which entered the Firth of Solway; so that the inundation not only carried away a great number of cattle and sheep, but many of the herdsmen and shepherds, washing down their bodies into the estuary. After the storm, when the flood subsided, an extraordinary spectacle was seen on a large sand-bank, called “the beds of Esk,” where there is a meeting of the tidal water, and where heavy bodies are usually left stranded after great floods. On this single bank were found collected together the bodies of 9 black cattle, 3 horses, 1840 sheep, 45 dogs, 180 hares, besides a great number of smaller animals, and, mingled with the rest, the corpses of two men and one woman.*

* Treatise on Practical Store Farming, p. 25.

Floods in Scotland, 1829.—In those more recent floods in Scotland, in August, 1829, whereby a fertile district on the east coast became a scene of dreadful desolation, a vast number of animals and plants were washed from the land, and found scattered about after the storm, around the mouths of the principal rivers. An eye-witness thus describes the scene which presented itself at the mouth of the Spey, in Morayshire:—“For several miles along the beach crowds were employed in endeavouring to save the wood and other wreck with which the heavy rolling tide was loaded; whilst the margin of the sea was strewn with the carcasses of domestic animals, and with millions of dead hares and rabbits. Thousands of living frogs, also, swept from the fields, no one can say how far off, were observed leaping among the wreck.”*

Savannahs of South America.—We are informed by Humboldt, that during the periodical swellings of the large rivers in South America great numbers of quadrupeds are annually drowned. Of the wild horses, for example, which graze in immense troops in the savannahs, thousands are said to perish when the river Apure is swollen, before they have time to reach the rising ground of the Llanos. The mares, during the season of high water, may be seen, followed by their colts, swimming about and feeding on the grass, of which the top alone waves above the waters. In this state they are pursued by crocodiles; and their thighs frequently bear the prints of the teeth of these carnivorous reptiles. “Such is the pliability,” observes the celebrated traveller, “of the organization of the animals which man has subjected to his sway, that horses, cows, and other species of European origin, lead, for a time, an amphibious life, surrounded by crocodiles, water-serpents, and manatees. When the rivers return again into their beds, they roam in the savannah, which is then spread over with a fine odoriferous grass, and enjoy, as in their native climate, the renewed vegetation of spring.”†

Floods of the Ganges.—We find it continually stated, by those who describe the Ganges and Burrampooter, that these rivers carry before them, during the flood season, not only floats of reeds and timber, but dead bodies of men, deer, and oxen.‡

In Java, 1699.—I have already referred to the effects of a flood which attended an earthquake in Java in 1699, when the turbid waters of the Batavian river destroyed all the fish except the carp; and when drowned buffaloes, tigers, rhinoceroses, deer, apes, and other wild beasts, were brought down to the sea-coast by the current, with several crocodiles which had been stifled in the mud.§

* Sir T. D. Lauder's *Floods in Morayshire, 1829*, p. 312, second ed.; and see ante, Vol. I. p. 171.

† Humboldt's *Pers. Nar.*, vol. iv. pp. 394—396.

‡ Malte-Brun, *Geog.*, vol. iii. p. 22.

§ See Vol. I. p. 421.

On the western side of the same island, in the territory of Goulongong, in the Regencies, a more recent volcanic eruption (1821) was attended by a flood, during which the river Tjetandoy bore down hundreds of carcasses of rhinoceroses and buffaloes, and swept away more than one hundred men and women from a multitude assembled on its banks to celebrate a festival. Whether the bodies reached the sea, or were deposited, with drift matter, in some of the large intervening alluvial plains, we are not informed.*

In Virginia, 1771.—I might enumerate a great number of local deluges that have swept through the fertile lands bordering on large rivers, especially in tropical countries, but I should surpass the limits assigned to this work. I may observe, however, that the destruction of the islands, in rivers, is often attended with great loss of lives. Thus, when the principal river in Virginia rose, in 1771, to the height of twenty-five feet above its ordinary level, it swept entirely away Elk Island, on which were seven hundred head of quadrupeds,—horses, oxen, sheep, and hogs,—and nearly one hundred houses.†

The reader will gather, from what was before said respecting the deposition of sediment by aqueous causes, that the greater number of the remains of quadrupeds drifted away by rivers must be intercepted by lakes before they reach the sea, or buried in fresh-water formations near the mouths of rivers. If they are carried still farther, the probabilities are increased of their rising to the surface in a state of putrefaction, and, in that case, of being there devoured by aquatic beasts of prey, or of subsiding into some spots whither no sediment is conveyed, and, consequently, where every vestige of them will, in the course of time, disappear.

Skeletons of animals in recent shell-marl, Scotland.—In some instances the skeletons of quadrupeds are met with abundantly in recent shell-marls in Scotland, where we cannot suppose them to have been imbedded by the action of rivers or floods. They all belong to species which now inhabit, or are known to have been indigenous in Scotland. The remains of several hundred skeletons have been procured within the last century, from five or six small lakes in Forfarshire, where shell-marl has been worked. Those of the stag (*Cervus elaphus*) are most numerous; and if the others be arranged in the order of their relative abundance, they will follow nearly thus—the ox, the boar, the horse, the sheep, the dog, the hare, the fox, the wolf, and the cat. The beaver seems extremely rare; but it has been found in the shell-marl of Loch Marlie, in Perthshire, and in the parish of Edrom, in Berwickshire.

In the greater part of these lake-deposits there are no signs of floods; and the expanse of water was originally so confined, that the smallest of

* This account I had from Mr. Baumhauer, Director-General of Finances in Java.

† Scots Mag., vol. xxxiii.

the above mentioned quadrupeds could have crossed, by swimming, from one shore to the other. Deer, and such species as take readily to the water, may often have been mired in trying to land, where the bottom was soft and quaggy, and in their efforts to escape may have plunged deeper into the marly bottom. Some individuals, I suspect, of different species, have fallen in when crossing the frozen surface in winter; for nothing can be more treacherous than the ice when covered with snow, in consequence of the springs, which are numerous, and which, retaining always an equal temperature, cause the ice, in certain spots, to be extremely thin, while in every other part of the lake it is strong enough to bear the heaviest weights.

Mammiferous remains in marine strata.—As the bones of mammalia are often so abundantly preserved in peat, and such lakes as have just been described, the encroachments of a sea upon a coast may sometimes throw down the imbedded skeletons, so that they may be carried away by tides and currents, and entombed in subaqueous formations. Some of the smaller quadrupeds, also, which burrow in the ground, as well as reptiles and every species of plant, are liable to be cast down into the waves by this cause, which must not be overlooked, although probably of comparatively small importance amongst the numerous agents whereby terrestrial organic remains are included in submarine strata.

CHAPTER XVI.

IMBEDDING OF THE REMAINS OF MAN AND HIS WORKS IN SUBAQUEOUS STRATA.

Drifting of human bodies to the sea by river inundations—Destruction of bridges and houses—Loss of lives by shipwreck—How human corpses may be preserved in recent deposits—Number of wrecked vessels—Fossil skeletons of men (p. 151.)—Fossil canoes, ships, and works of art—Chemical changes which metallic articles have undergone after long submergence—Imbedding of cities and forests in subaqueous strata by subsidence (p. 154.)—Earthquake of Cutch in 1819—Berkley's arguments for the recent date of the creation of man (p. 156.)—Concluding remarks.

I SHALL now proceed to inquire in what manner the mortal remains of man and the works of his hands may be permanently preserved in subaqueous strata. Of the many hundred million human beings which perish

in the course of every century on the land, every vestige is usually destroyed in the course of a few thousand years ; but of the smaller number that perish in the waters, a considerable proportion must frequently be entombed under such circumstances, that parts of them may endure throughout entire geological epochs.

The bodies of men, together with those of the inferior animals, are occasionally washed down during river inundations into seas and lakes.* Belzoni witnessed a flood on the Nile, in September, 1818, where, although the river rose only three feet and a-half above its ordinary level, several villages, with some hundreds of men, women, and children, were swept away.† It was before mentioned that a rise of six feet of water in the Ganges, in 1763, was attended with a much greater loss of lives.‡

In the year 1771, when the inundations in the north of England appear to have equalled the recent floods in Morayshire, a great number of houses and their inhabitants were swept away by the rivers Tyne, Can, Wear, Tees, and Greta ; and no less than twenty-one bridges were destroyed in the courses of these rivers. At the village of Bywell the flood tore the dead bodies and coffins out of the churchyard, and bore them away, together with many of the living inhabitants. During the same tempest an immense number of cattle, horses, and sheep, were also transported to the sea, while the whole coast was covered with the wreck of ships. Four centuries before (in 1338), the same district had been visited by a similar continuance of heavy rains followed by disastrous floods, and it is not improbable that these catastrophes may recur periodically. As the population increases, and buildings and bridges are multiplied, we must expect the loss of lives and property to augment.§

Fossilization of human bodies in the bed of the sea.—If to the hundreds of human bodies committed to the deep in the way of ordinary burial we add those of individuals lost by shipwreck, we shall find that in the course of a single year, a great number of human remains are consigned to the subaqueous regions. I shall hereafter advert to a calculation by which it appears that more than five hundred *British* vessels alone, averaging each a burthen of about one hundred and twenty tons, are wrecked, and sink to the bottom, *annually*. Of these the crews for the most part escape, although it sometimes happens that all perish. In one great naval action several thousand individuals sometimes share a watery grave.

Many of these corpses are instantly devoured by predaceous fish, sometimes before they reach the bottom ; still more frequently when they rise again to the surface, and float in a state of putrefaction. Many decompose on the floor of the ocean, where no sediment is thrown down upon them ;

* See ante, pp. 143. 145.

† Narrative of Discovery in Egypt, &c., London, 1820.

‡ Vol. I. p. 227.

§ Scots Mag., vol. xxxiii., 1771.

but if they fall upon a reef where corals and shells are becoming agglutinated into a solid rock, or subside where the delta of a river is advancing, they may be preserved for an incalculable series of ages.

Often at the distance of a few hundred feet from a coral reef, where wrecks are not unfrequent, there are no soundings at the depth of many hundred fathoms. Canoes, merchant vessels, and ships of war may have sunk and have been enveloped, in such situations, in calcareous sand and breccia, detached by the breakers from the summit of a submarine mountain. Should a volcanic eruption happen to cover such remains with ashes and sand, and a current of lava be afterwards poured over them, the ships and human skeletons might remain uninjured beneath the superincumbent mass, like the houses and works of art in the subterranean cities of Campania. Already many human remains may have been thus preserved beneath formations more than a thousand feet in thickness; for, in some volcanic archipelagos, a period of thirty or forty centuries might well be supposed sufficient for such an accumulation.

It was stated, that at the distance of about forty miles from the base of the delta of the Ganges, there is a circular space about fifteen miles in diameter where soundings of a thousand feet sometimes fail to reach the bottom.* As during the flood season the quantity of mud and sand poured by the great rivers into the Bay of Bengal is so great that the sea only recovers its transparency at the distance of sixty miles from the coast, this depression must be gradually shoaling, especially as during the monsoons the sea, loaded with mud and sand, is beaten back in that direction towards the delta. Now, if a ship or human body sink down to the bottom in such a spot, it is by no means improbable that it may become buried under a depth of three or four thousand feet of sediment in the same number of years.

Even on that part of the floor of the ocean to which no accession of drift matter is carried (a part which probably constitutes, at any given period, by far the larger proportion of the whole submarine area), there are circumstances accompanying a wreck which favour the conservation of skeletons. For when the vessel fills suddenly with water, especially in the night, many persons are drowned between decks and in their cabins, so that their bodies are prevented from rising again to the surface. The vessel often strikes upon an uneven bottom, and is overturned; in which case the ballast, consisting of sand, shingle and rock, or the cargo, frequently composed of heavy and durable materials, may be thrown down upon the carcasses. In the case of ships of war, cannon, shot, and other warlike stores, may press down with their weight the timbers of the vessel as they decay, and beneath these and the metallic substances the bones of man may be preserved.

* Vol. I. p. 225.

Number of wrecked vessels.—When we reflect on the number of curious monuments consigned to the bed of the ocean, in the course of every naval war from the earliest times, our conceptions are greatly raised respecting the multiplicity of lasting memorials which man is leaving of his labours. During our last great struggle with France, thirty-two of our ships of the line went to the bottom in the space of twenty-two years, besides seven 50-gun ships, eighty-six frigates, and a multitude of smaller vessels. The navies of the other European powers, France, Holland, Spain, and Denmark, were almost annihilated during the same period, so that the aggregate of their losses must have many times exceeded that of Great Britain. In every one of these ships were batteries of cannon constructed of iron or brass, whereof a great number had the dates and places of their manufacture inscribed upon them in letters cast in metal. In each there were coins of copper, silver, and often many of gold, capable of serving as valuable historical monuments; in each were an infinite variety of instruments of the arts of war and peace; many formed of materials, such as glass and earthenware, capable of lasting for indefinite ages when once removed from the mechanical action of the waves, and buried under a mass of matter which may exclude the corroding action of sea-water.

But let it not be imagined that the fury of war is more conducive than the peaceful spirit of commercial enterprise to the accumulation of wrecked vessels in the bed of the sea. From an examination of Lloyd's lists, from the year 1793 to the commencement of 1829, Capt. W. H. Smyth ascertained that the number of *British vessels* alone lost during that period amounted on an average to no less than one and a-half *daily*; an extent of loss which would hardly have been anticipated, although we learn from Moreau's Tables that the number of merchant vessels employed at one time, in the navigation of England and Scotland, amounted to about twenty thousand, having one with another a mean burthen of 120 tons.* My friend, Mr. J. L. Prevost, also informs me that on inspecting Lloyd's lists for the years 1829, 1830, and 1831, he finds that no less than 1953 vessels were lost in those three years, their average tonnage being above 150 tons, or in all nearly 300,000 tons, being at the enormous rate of 100,000 tons annually of the merchant vessels of one nation only. This increased loss arises, I presume, from increasing activity in commerce.

Out of 551 ships of the royal navy lost to the country during the period above mentioned, only 160 were taken or destroyed by the enemy, the rest having either stranded or foundered, or having been burnt by accident; a striking proof that the dangers of our naval warfare, however great, may be far exceeded by the storm, the shoal, the lee-shore, and all the other perils of the deep.†

* Cæsar Moreau's Tables of the Navigation of Great Britain.

† I give these results on the authority of Captain W. H. Smyth, R. N.

Durable nature of many of their contents.—Millions of silver dollars and other coins have been sometimes submerged in a single ship, and on these, when they happen to be enveloped in a matrix capable of protecting them from chemical changes, much information of historical interest will remain inscribed, and endure for periods as indefinite as have the delicate marking of zoophytes or lapidified plants, in some of the ancient secondary rocks. In almost every large ship, moreover, there are some precious stones set in seals, and other articles of use and ornament composed of the hardest substances in nature, on which letters and various images are carved—engravings which they may retain when included in subaqueous strata, as long as a crystal preserves its natural form.

It was, therefore, a splendid boast, that the deeds of the English chivalry at Agincourt made Henry's chronicle

———as rich with praise
As is the ooze and bottom of the deep
With sunken wreck and sunless treasures;

for it is probable that a greater number of monuments of the skill and industry of man will, in the course of ages, be collected together in the bed of the ocean, than will exist at any one time on the surface of the continents.

If our species be of as recent a date as is generally supposed, it will be vain to seek for the remains of man and the works of his hands imbedded in submarine strata, except in those regions where violent earthquakes are frequent, and the alterations of relative level so great, that the bed of the sea may have been converted into land within the historical era. We need not despair, however, of the discovery of such monuments when those regions which have been peopled by man from the earliest ages, and which are at the same time the principal theatres of volcanic action, shall be examined by the joint skill of the antiquary and geologist.

Power of human remains to resist decay.—There can be no doubt that human remains are as capable of resisting decay as are the harder parts of the inferior animals; and I have already cited the remark of Cuvier, that “in ancient fields of battle the bones of men have suffered as little decomposition as those of horses which were buried in the same grave.”* In the delta of the Ganges bones of men have been found in digging a well at the depth of ninety feet;† but as that river frequently shifts its course and fills up its ancient channels, we are not called upon to suppose that these bodies are of extremely high antiquity, or that they were buried when that part of the surrounding delta where they occur was first gained from the sea.

* Vol. I. p. 150.

† Von Hoff, vol. i. p. 379.

Fossil skeletons of men.—Several skeletons of men, more or less mutilated, have been found in the West Indies, on the north-west coast of the main land of Guadaloupe, in a kind of rock which is known to be forming daily, and which consists of minute fragments of shells and corals, incrustated with a calcareous cement resembling travertin, by which also the different grains are bound together. The lens shows that some of the fragments of coral composing this stone still retain the same red colour which is seen in the reefs of living coral which surround the island. The shells belong to species of the neighbouring sea, intermixed with some terrestrial kinds which now live on the island, and among them is *Bulimus Guadaloupensis* of Férussac. The human skeletons still retain some of their animal matter, and all their phosphate of lime. One of them, of which the head is wanting, may now be seen in the British Museum, and another in the Royal Cabinet at Paris. According to Mr. König, the rock in which the former is inclosed is harder under the mason's saw and chisel than statuary marble. It is described as forming a kind of glacis, probably an indurated beach, which slants from the steep cliffs of the island to the sea, and is nearly all submerged at high tide.

Similar formations are in progress in the whole of the West-Indian archipelago, and they have greatly extended the plain of Cayes in St. Domingo, where fragments of vases and other human works have been found at a depth of twenty feet. In digging wells also near Catania, in Sicily, tools have been discovered in a rock somewhat similar.

Buried ships, canoes, and works of art.—When a vessel is stranded in shallow water, it usually becomes the nucleus of a sand-bank, as has been exemplified in several of our harbours, and this circumstance tends greatly to its preservation. About fifty years ago, a vessel from Purbeck, laden with three hundred tons of stone, struck on a shoal off the entrance of Poole harbour and foundered; the crew were saved, but the vessel and cargo remain to this day at the bottom. Since that period the shoal at the entrance of the harbour has so extended itself in a westerly direction towards Peveril Point in Purbeck, that the navigable channel is thrown a mile nearer that point.* The cause is obvious: the tidal current deposits the sediment with which it is charged around any object which checks its velocity. Matter also drifted along the bottom is arrested by any obstacle, and accumulates round it, just as the African sand-winds, before described, raise a small hillock over the carcass of every dead camel exposed on the surface of the desert.

I before alluded to an ancient Dutch vessel, discovered in the deserted channel of the river Rother, in Sussex, of which the oak wood was much blackened, but its texture unchanged.† The interior was filled with flu-

* This account I received from the Honourable Charles Harris.

† Vol. I. p. 263.

viatile silt, as was also the case in regard to a vessel discovered in a former bed of the Mersey, and another disinterred where the St. Katherine Docks are excavated in the alluvial plain of the Thames. In like manner many ships have been found preserved entire in modern strata, formed by the silting up of estuaries along the southern shores of the Baltic, especially in Pomerania. Between Bromberg and Nakel, for example, a vessel and two anchors in a very perfect state were dug up far from the sea.*

At the mouth of a river in Nova Scotia, a schooner of thirty-two tons, laden with live stock, was lying with her side to the tide, when the bore, or tidal wave, which rises there about ten feet in perpendicular height, rushed into the estuary and overturned the vessel, so that it instantly disappeared. After the tide had ebbed, the schooner was so totally buried in the sand that the taffrel or upper rail over the stern was alone visible.† We are informed by Leigh, that on draining Martin Meer, a lake eighteen miles in circumference, in Lancashire, a bed of marl was laid dry, wherein no fewer than eight canoes were found imbedded. In figure and dimensions they were not unlike those now used in America. In a morass about nine miles distant from this Meer a whetstone and an axe of mixed metal were dug up.‡ In Ayrshire, also, three canoes were found in Loch Doon some few years ago; and during the year 1831 four others, each hewn out of separate oak trees. They were twenty-three feet in length, two and a half in depth, and nearly four feet in breadth at the stern. In the mud which filled one of them was found a war-club of oak and a stone battle-axe. A canoe of oak was also found in 1820, in peat overlying the shell marl of the Loch of Kinnordy in Forfarshire.§

Manner in which ships may be preserved in a deep sea.—It is extremely possible that the submerged woodwork of ships which have sunk where the sea is two or three miles deep has undergone greater chemical changes in an equal space of time, than in the cases above mentioned; for the experiments of Scoresby show that wood may at certain depths be impregnated in a single hour with salt-water, so that its specific gravity is entirely altered. It may often happen that hot springs charged with carbonate of lime, siliceous, and other mineral ingredients, may issue at great depths, in which case every pore of the vegetable tissue may be injected with the lapidifying liquid, whether calcareous or siliceous, before the smallest decay commences. The conversion also of wood into lignite is probably more rapid under enormous pressure. But the change of the timber into lignite or coal would not prevent the original form of a ship from being distinguished; for as we find, in strata of the carboniferous era, the bark of the hollow reed-like trees converted into coal, and the

* Von Hoff, vol. i. p. 368.

† Silliman's Geol. Lectures, p. 78, who cites Penn.

‡ Leigh's Lancashire, p. 17, A. D. 1700.

§ Geol. Trans., second ser., vol. ii. p. 87.

central cavity filled with sandstone, so might we trace the outline of a ship in coal; while in the indurated mud, sandstone, or limestone, filling the interior, we might discover instruments of human art, ballast consisting of rocks foreign to the rest of the stratum, and other contents of the ship.

Submerged metallic substances.—Many of the metallic substances which fall into the waters probably lose, in the course of ages, the forms artificially imparted to them; but under certain circumstances these may be preserved for indefinite periods. The cannon inclosed in a calcareous rock, drawn up from the delta of the Rhone, which is now in the museum at Montpellier, might probably have endured as long as the calcareous matrix; but even if the metallic matter had been removed, and had entered into new combinations, still a mould of its original shape would have been left, corresponding to those impressions of shells which we see in rocks, from which all the carbonate of lime has been subtracted. About the year 1776, says Mr. King, some fishermen, sweeping for anchors in the Gull stream (a part of the sea near the Downs), drew up a very curious old swivel gun, near eight feet in length. The barrel, which was about five feet long, was of brass; but the handle by which it was traversed was about three feet in length, and the swivel and pivot on which it turned were of iron. Around these latter were formed incrustations of sand converted into a kind of stone, of an exceedingly strong texture and firmness; whereas round the barrel of the gun, except where it was near adjoining to the iron, there was no such incrustation, the greater part of it being clean, and in good condition, just as if it had still continued in use. In the incrusting stone, adhering to it on the outside, were a number of shells and corallines, “just as they are often found in a fossil state.” These were all so strongly attached, that it required as much force to separate them from the matrix “as to break a fragment off any hard rock.”*

In the year 1745, continues the same writer, the Fox man-of-war was stranded on the coast of East Lothian, and went to pieces. About thirty-three years afterwards a violent storm laid bare a part of the wreck, and threw up near the place several masses, “consisting of iron, ropes, and balls,” covered over with ochreous sand, concreted and hardened into a kind of stone. The substance of the rope was very little altered. The consolidated sand retained perfect impressions of parts of an iron ring, “just as impressions of extraneous fossil bodies are found in various kinds of strata.”†

After a storm, in the year 1824, which occasioned a considerable shifting of the sands near St. Andrew's, in Scotland, a gun-barrel of ancient construction was found, which is conjectured to have belonged to one of the wrecked vessels of the Spanish Armada. It is now in the museum of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland, and is incrustated over by

* Phil. Trans., 1779.

† Ibid., vol. lxi., 1779.

a thin coating of sand, the grains of which are cemented by brown ferruginous matter. Attached to this coating are fragments of various shells, as of the common cardium, mya, &c.

Many other examples are recorded of iron instruments taken up from the bed of the sea near the British coasts, incased by a thick coating of conglomerate, consisting of pebbles and sand, cemented by oxide of iron.

Dr. Davy describes a bronze helmet, of the antique Grecian form, taken up in 1825, from a shallow part of the sea, between the citadel of Corfu and the village of Castrades. Both the interior and exterior of the helmet were partially incrustated with shells, and a deposit of carbonate of lime. The surface generally, both under the incrustation, and where freed from it, was of a variegated colour, mottled with spots of green, dirty white, and red. On minute inspection with a lens, the green and red patches proved to consist of crystals of the red oxide and carbonate of copper, and the dirty white chiefly of oxide of tin.

The mineralizing process, says Dr. Davy, which has produced these new combinations, has, in general, penetrated very little into the substance of the helmet. The incrustation and rust removed, the metal is found bright beneath; in some places considerably corroded, in others very slightly. It proves, on analysis, to be copper, alloyed with 18.5 per cent. of tin. Its colour is that of our common brass, and it possesses a considerable degree of flexibility.

“It is a curious question,” he adds, “how the crystals were formed in the helmet, and on the adhering calcareous deposit. There being no reason to suppose deposition from solution, are we not under the necessity of inferring, that the mineralizing process depends on a small motion and separation of the particles of the original compound? This motion may have been due to the operation of electro-chemical powers which may have separated the different metals of the alloy.”*

Effects of the Subsidence of Land, in imbedding Cities and Forests in subaqueous Strata.

We have hitherto considered the transportation of plants and animals from the land by *aqueous* agents, and their inhumation in lacustrine or submarine deposits, and we may now inquire what tendency the subsidence of tracts of land by *earthquakes* may have to produce analogous effects. Several examples of the sinking down of buildings, and portions of towns near the shore, to various depths beneath the level of the sea during subterranean movements, were before enumerated in treating of the changes brought about by *inorganic* causes. The events alluded to were comprised within a brief portion of the historical period, and

* Phil. Trans., 1826, part ii. p. 55.

confined to a small number of the regions of active volcanos. Yet these authentic facts, relating merely to the last century and a half, gave indications of considerable changes in the physical geography of the globe. If, during the earthquake of Jamaica, in 1692, some of the houses in Port Royal subsided, together with the ground they stood upon, to the depth of twenty-four, thirty-six, and forty-eight feet under water, we are not to suppose that this was the only spot throughout the whole range of the coasts of that island, or the bed of the surrounding sea, which suffered similar depressions. If the quay at Lisbon sunk at once to the depth of several hundred feet in 1755, we must not imagine that this was the only point on the shores of the peninsula where similar phenomena might have been witnessed.

If, during the short period since South America has been colonized by Europeans, we have proof of alterations of level at the three principal ports on the western shores, Callao, Valparaiso, and Concepcion,* we cannot for a moment suspect that the cities, so distant from each other, have been selected as the peculiar points where the desolating power of the earthquake has expended its chief fury. "It would be a knowing arrow that could choose out the brave men from the cowards," retorted the young Spartan, when asked if his comrades who had fallen on the field of battle were braver than he and his fellow prisoners; we might, in the same manner, remark that a geologist must attribute no small discrimination and malignity to the subterranean force, if he should suppose it to spare habitually a line of coast many thousand miles in length, with the exception of those few spots where populous towns have been erected. On considering how small is the area occupied by the seaports of this disturbed region,—points where alone each slight change of the relative level of the sea and land can be recognised, and reflecting on the proofs in our possession, of the local revolutions that have happened on the site of each port, within the last century and a-half—our conceptions must be greatly exalted respecting the magnitude of the alterations which the country between the Andes and the sea may have undergone, even in the course of the last six thousand years.

Cutch earthquake.—The manner in which a large extent of surface may be submerged, so that the terrestrial plants and animals may be imbedded in subaqueous strata, cannot be better illustrated than by the earthquake of Cutch, in 1819, before alluded to.† It is stated, that, for some years after that earthquake, the withered tamarisks and other shrubs protruded their tops above the waves, in parts of the lagoon formed by subsidence, on the site of the village of Sindree and its environs; but, after the flood of 1826, they were seen no longer. Every geologist will

* See Vol. I. pp. 377. 380. 419. 421.

† Vol. I. p. 382.

at once perceive, that forests sunk by such subterranean movements may become imbedded in subaqueous deposits, both fluvial and marine, and the trees may still remain erect, or sometimes the roots and part of the trunks may continue in their original position, while the current may have broken off, or levelled with the ground, their upper stems and branches.

Buildings how preserved under water.—Some of the buildings which have at different times subsided beneath the level of the sea have been immediately covered up to a certain extent with strata of volcanic matter showered down upon them. Such was the case at Tomboro in Sumbawa, in the present century, and at the site of the temple of Serapis, in the environs of Puzzuoli, probably in the 12th century. The entrance of a river charged with sediment in the vicinity may still more frequently occasion the rapid envelopment of buildings in regularly stratified formations. But if no foreign matter be introduced, the buildings, when once removed to a depth where the action of the waves is insensible, and where no great current happens to flow, may last for indefinite periods, and be as durable as the floor of the ocean itself, which may often be composed of the very same materials. There is no reason to doubt the tradition mentioned by the classic writers, that the submerged Grecian towns of Bura and Helice were seen under water; and I am informed by an eye-witness that eighty-eight years after the convulsion of 1692, the houses of Port Royal were still visible at the bottom of the sea.*

Berkley's arguments for the recent date of the creation of man.—I cannot conclude this chapter without recalling to the reader's mind a memorable passage written by Berkley a century ago, in which he inferred, on grounds which may be termed strictly geological, the recent date of the creation of man. "To any one," says he, "who considers that on digging into the earth, such quantities of shells, and in some places bones and horns of animals, are found sound and entire, after having lain there in all probability some thousands of years; it should seem probable that guns, medals, and implements in metal or stone might have lasted entire, buried under ground forty or fifty thousand years, if the world had been so old. How comes it then to pass that no remains are found, no antiquities of those numerous ages preceding the Scripture accounts of time; that no fragments of buildings, no public monuments, no intaglias, cameos, statues, basso-relievos, medals, inscriptions, utensils, or artificial works of any kind, are ever discovered, which may bear testimony to the existence of those mighty empires, those successions of

* Admiral Sir Charles Hamilton frequently saw the submerged houses of Port Royal in the year 1780, in that part of the harbour which lies between the town and the usual anchorage of men-of-war. Bryan Edwards also says, in his History of the West Indies (vol. i. p. 235, oct. ed. 3 vols. 1801), that in 1793 the ruins were visible in clear weather from the boats which sailed over them.

monarchs, heroes, and demi-gods, for so many thousand years? Let us look forward and suppose ten or twenty thousand years to come, during which time we will suppose that plagues, famine, wars, and *earthquakes* shall have made great havoc in the world, is it not highly probable that at the end of such a period, pillars, vases, and statues now in being of granite, or porphyry, or jasper, (stones of such hardness as we know them to have lasted two thousand years above ground, without any considerable alteration,) would bear record of these and past ages? Or that some of our current coins might then be dug up, or old walls and the foundations of buildings show themselves, as well as the shells and stones of *the primeval world*, which are preserved down to our times.”*

That many signs of the agency of man would have lasted at least as long as “the shells of the primeval world,” had our race been so ancient, we may feel as fully persuaded as Berkley; and we may anticipate with confidence that many edifices and implements of human workmanship, and the skeletons of men, and casts of the human form, will continue to exist when a great part of the present mountains, continents, and seas, have disappeared. Assuming the future duration of the planet to be indefinitely protracted, we can foresee no limit to the perpetuation of some of the memorials of man, which are continually entombed in the bowels of the earth or in the bed of the ocean, unless we carry forward our views to a period sufficient to allow the various causes of change, both igneous and aqueous, to remodel more than once the entire crust of the earth. *One* complete revolution will be inadequate to efface every monument of our existence; for many works of art might enter again and again into the formation of successive eras, and escape obliteration even though the very rocks in which they had been for ages imbedded were destroyed, just as pebbles included in the conglomerates of one epoch often contain the organized remains of beings which flourished during a prior era.

Yet it is no less true, as a late distinguished philosopher has declared, “that none of the works of a mortal being can be eternal.”† They are in the first place wrested from the hands of man, and lost as far as regards their subserviency to his use, by the instrumentality of those very causes which place them in situations where they are enabled to endure for indefinite periods. And even when they have been included in rocky strata, when they have been made to enter as it were into the solid framework of the globe itself, they must nevertheless eventually perish; for every year some portion of the earth’s crust is shattered by earthquakes or melted by volcanic fire, or ground to dust by the moving waters on the surface. “The river of Lethe,” as Bacon eloquently remarks, “runneth as well above ground as below.”‡

* Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher, vol. ii. pp. 84, 85. 1732.

† Davy, *Consolations in Travel*, p. 276.

‡ Essay on the Vicissitude of Things.

CHAPTER XVII.

IMBEDDING OF AQUATIC SPECIES IN SUBAQUEOUS STRATA.

Inhumation of fresh-water plants and animals—Shell marl—Fossilized seed-vessels and stems of chara—Recent deposits in American lakes—Fresh-water species drifted into seas and estuaries—Lewes levels—Alternations of marine and fresh-water strata, how caused—Imbedding of marine plants and animals (p. 162)—Cetacea stranded on our shores—Liability of littoral and estuary testacea to be swept into the deep sea—Effects of a storm in the Firth of Forth—Burrowing shells secured from the ordinary action of waves and currents—Living testacea found at considerable depths—Extent of some recent shelly deposits.

HAVING treated of the imbedding of terrestrial plants and animals, and of human remains, in deposits now forming beneath the waters, I come next to consider in what manner *aquatic* species may be entombed in strata formed in their own element.

Fresh-water plants and animals.—The remains of species belonging to those genera of the animal and vegetable kingdoms which are more or less exclusively confined to fresh water, are for the most part preserved in the beds of lakes or estuaries, but they are oftentimes swept down by rivers into the sea, and there intermingled with the exuvæ of marine races. The phenomena attending their inhumation in lacustrine deposits are sometimes revealed to our observation by the drainage of small lakes, such as are those in Scotland, which have been laid dry for the sake of obtaining shell marl for agricultural uses.

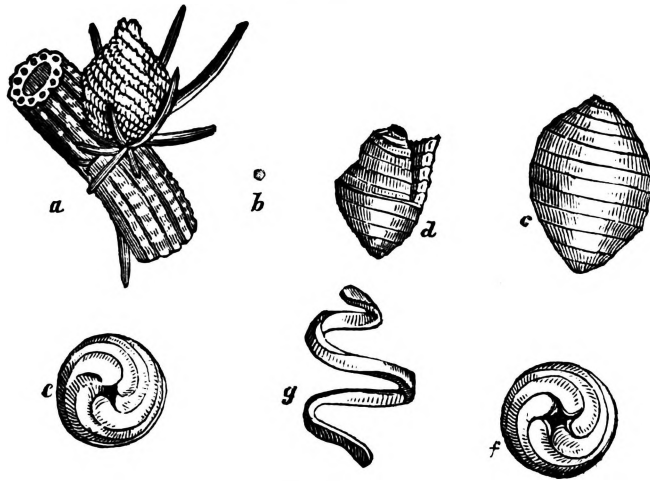
In these recent formations, as seen in Forfarshire, two or three beds of calcareous marl are sometimes observed separated from each other by layers of drift peat, sand, or fissile clay. The marl often consists almost entirely of an aggregate of shells of the genera *limnea*, *planorbis*, *valvata*, and *cyclas*, of species now existing in Scotland. A considerable proportion of the testacea appear to have died very young, and few of the shells are of a size which indicates their having attained a state of maturity. The shells are sometimes entirely decomposed, forming a pulverulent marl; sometimes in a state of good preservation. They are frequently intermixed with stems of charæ and other aquatic vegetables, the whole being matted together and compressed, forming laminæ often as thin as paper.

Fossilized seed-vessels and stems of chara.—As the chara is an aquatic plant, which occurs frequently fossil in formations of different eras, and is often of much importance to the geologist in characterizing entire groups of strata, I shall describe the manner in which I have found the recent species in a petrified state. They occur in a marl-lake in Forfar-

shire, inclosed in nodules, and sometimes in a continuous stratum of a kind of travertin.

The seed-vessel of these plants is remarkably tough and hard, and consists of a membranous nut covered by an integument (*d*, Fig. 66.), both of which are spirally striated or ribbed. The integument is composed of five spiral valves, of a quadrangular form (*g*). In *Chara hispida*, which abounds in the lakes of Forfarshire, and which has become fossil in the Bakie Loch, each of the spiral valves of the seed-vessel turns rather more than twice round the circumference, the whole together making between ten and eleven rings. The number of these rings differs greatly in different species, but in the same appears to be very constant.

Fig. 66.

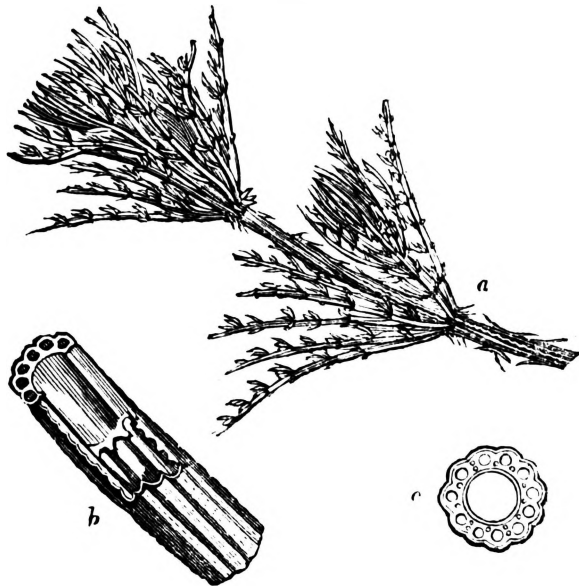
Seed-vessel of *Chara hispida*.

- a*. Part of the stem with the seed-vessel attached. Magnified.
- b*. Natural size of the seed-vessel.
- c*. Integument of the Gyrogonite, or petrified seed-vessel of *Chara hispida*, found in the Scotch marl-lakes. Magnified.
- d*. Section showing the nut within the integument.
- e*. Lower end of the integument to which the stem was attached.
- f*. Upper end of the integument to which the stigmata were attached.
- g*. One of the spiral valves of *c*.

The stems of charæ occur fossil in the Scotch marl in great abundance. In some species, as in *Chara hispida*, the plant when living contains so much carbonate of lime in its vegetable organization, independently of calcareous incrustation, that it effervesces strongly with acids when dry. The stems of *Chara hispida* are longitudinally striated, with a tendency to be spiral. These striæ, as appears to be the case with all charæ, turn always like the worm of a screw from right to left, while those of the seed-vessel wind round in a contrary direction. A cross section of the stem exhibits a curious structure, for it is composed of a large tube sur-

rounded by smaller tubes (Fig. 67., *b*, *c*), as is seen in some extinct as well as recent species. In the stems of several species, however, there is only a single tube.*

Fig. 67.



Stem and branches of Chara hispida.

- a.* Stem and branches of the natural size.
- b.* Section of the stem magnified.
- c.* Showing the central tube surrounded by two rings of smaller tubes.

The valves of a small animal called cypris (*C. ornata*? Lam.) occur completely fossilized, like the stems of charæ, in the Scotch travertine above mentioned. This cypris inhabits the lakes and ponds of England, where it is not uncommon. Species of the same genus also occur abundantly in ancient fresh-water formations.†

Recent deposits in North American lakes.—The recent strata of lacustrine origin above alluded to are of very small extent, but analogous deposits on the grandest scale are forming in the great lakes of North America. By the subsidence of the waters of Lakes Superior and Huron, occasioned probably by the partial destruction of their barriers at some unknown period, beds of sand 150 feet thick are exposed, below which are seen beds of clay, inclosing shells of the very species which now inhabit the lake.‡

* On Fresh-water Marl, &c. By C. Lyell. Geol. Trans., vol. ii., second series, p. 73.

† For figures of Cypris, see Book IV. chaps xvii. and xxiii.

‡ Dr. Bigsby, Journal of Science, &c. No. xxxvii. pp. 262, 263.

But no careful examination appears as yet to have been made of recent fresh-water formations within the tropics, where the waters teem with life, and where in the bed of a newly-drained lake the remains of the alligator, crocodile, tortoise, and perhaps some large fish, might be discovered.

Imbedding of fresh-water Species in Estuary and Marine Deposits.

In Lewes levels.—We have sometimes an opportunity of examining the deposits which within the historical period have silted up some of our estuaries; and excavations made for wells and other purposes, where the sea has been finally excluded, enabled us to observe the state of the organic remains in these tracts. The valley of the Ouze between Newhaven and Lewes is one of several estuaries from which the sea has retired within the last seven or eight centuries; and here, as appears from the researches of Mr. Mantell, strata thirty feet and upwards in thickness have accumulated. At the top, beneath the vegetable soil, is a bed of peat about five feet thick, inclosing many trunks of trees. Next below is a stratum of blue clay containing fresh-water shells of about nine species, such as now inhabit the district. Intermixed with these was observed the skeleton of a deer. Lower down, the layers of blue clay contain, with the above-mentioned fresh-water shells, several marine species well known on our coast. In the lowest beds, often at the depth of thirty-six feet, these marine testacea occur without the slightest intermixture of fluviatile species, and amongst them the skull of the narwal, or sea unicorn (*Monodon monoceros*), has been detected. Underneath all these deposits is a bed of pipe-clay, derived from the subjacent chalk.*

If we had no historical information respecting the former existence of an inlet of the sea in this valley, and of its gradual obliteration, the inspection of the section above described would show as clearly as a written chronicle, the following sequence of events. First, there was a salt water estuary peopled for many years by species of marine testacea identical with those now living, and into which some of the larger cetacea occasionally entered. Secondly, the inlet grew shallower, and the water became brackish, or alternately salt and fresh, so that the remains of fresh water and marine shells were mingled in the blue argillaceous sediment of its bottom. Thirdly, the shoaling continued until the river water prevailed, so that it was no longer habitable by marine testacea, but fitted only for the abode of fluviatile species and aquatic insects. Fourthly, a peaty swamp or morass was formed, where some trees grew, or perhaps were drifted during floods, and where terrestrial quadrupeds were mired. Finally,

* Mantell, Geol. of Sussex, p. 235; also Catalogue of Org. Rem., Geol. Trans., vol. iii. part i. p. 201, second series.

the soil being flooded by the river only at distant intervals, became a verdant meadow.

In delta of Ganges.—It was before stated, that on the sea-coast, in the delta of the Ganges, there are eight great openings, each of which has evidently, at some ancient periods, served in its turn as the principal channel of discharge.* Now, as the base of the delta is 200 miles in length, it must happen that, as often as the great volume of river-water is thrown into the sea by a new mouth, the sea will at one point be converted from salt to fresh, and at another from fresh to salt; for, with the exception of those parts where the principal discharge takes place, the salt water not only washes the base of the delta, but enters far into every creek and lagoon. It is evident, then, that repeated alternations of beds containing fresh-water shells, with others filled with corals and marine exuvæ, may here be formed; and each series may be of great thickness, as the sea on which the Gangetic delta gains is of considerable depth, and intervals of centuries elapse between each alteration in the course of the principal stream.

In delta of Indus.—Analogous phenomena must sometimes be occasioned by such alternate elevation and depression of the land as was shown to be taking place in the delta of the Indus.† But the subterranean movements affect but a small number of the deltas formed at one period on the globe; whereas, the silting up of some of the arms of great rivers and the opening of others, and the consequent variation of the points where the chief volume of their waters is discharged into the sea, are phenomena common to almost every delta.

The variety of species of testacea contained in the recent calcareous marl of Scotland, before mentioned, is very small, but the abundance of individuals extremely great, a circumstance very characteristic of fresh-water formations in general, as compared to marine; for in the latter, as is seen on sea-beaches, coral reefs, or in the bottom of seas examined by dredging, wherever the individual shells are exceedingly numerous, there rarely fails to be a vast variety of species.

Imbedding of the Remains of Marine Plants and Animals.

Marine Plants.—The large banks of drift sea-weed which occur on each side of the equator in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans, were before alluded to.‡ These, when they subside, may often produce considerable beds of vegetable matter. In Holland, submarine peat is derived from fuci, and on parts of our own coast from *Zostera marina*. In places where algæ do not generate peat, they may nevertheless leave traces of their form imprinted on argillaceous and calcareous mud, as they are usually very tough in their texture.

* Vol. I. p. 225.

† Vol. I. p. 383.

‡ Ante, p. 18.

Cetacea.—It is not uncommon for the larger cetacea, which can float only in a considerable depth of water, to be carried during storms or high tides into estuaries, or upon low shores, where, upon the retiring of high water, they are stranded. Thus a narwal (*Monodon monoceros*), was found on the beach near Boston in Lincolnshire, in the year 1800, the whole of its body buried in the mud. A fisherman going to his boat saw the horn and tried to pull it out, when the animal began to stir itself.* An individual of the common whale (*Balæna mysticetus*), which measured seventy feet, came ashore near Peterhead, in 1682. Many individuals of the genus *Balænoptera* have met the same fate. It will be sufficient to refer to those cast on shore near Burnt Island, and at Alloa, recorded by Sibbald and Neill. The other individual mentioned by Sibbald, as having come ashore at Boyne, in Banffshire, was probably a razor-back. Of the genus *Catodon* (*Cachalot*), Ray mentions a large one stranded on the west coast of Holland in 1598, and the fact is also commemorated in a Dutch engraving of the time of much merit. Sibbald, too, records that a herd of Cachalots, upwards of 100 in number, were found stranded at Kairston, in Orkney. The dead bodies of the larger cetacea are sometimes found floating on the surface of the waters, as was the case with the immense whale exhibited in London in 1831. And the carcass of a sea-cow or Lamantine (*Halicora*) was, in 1785, cast ashore near Leith.

To some accident of this kind, we may refer the position of the skeleton of a whale, seventy-three feet long, which was found at Airthrey, on the Forth, near Stirling, imbedded in clay twenty feet higher than the surface of the highest tide of the river Forth at the present day. From the situation of the Roman station and causeways at a small distance from the spot, it is concluded that the whale must have been stranded there at a period prior to the Christian era.†

Other fossil remains of this class have also been found in estuaries, known to have been silted up in recent times, one example of which has been already mentioned near Lewes, in Sussex.

Marine reptiles.—Some singular fossils have lately been discovered in the island of Ascension, in a stone said to be continually forming on the beach, where the waves throw up small rounded fragments of shells and corals, which, in the course of time, become firmly agglutinated together, and constitute a stone used largely for building and making lime. In a quarry on the N. W. side of the island, about 100 yards from the sea, some fossil eggs of turtles have been discovered in the hard rock thus formed. The eggs must have been nearly hatched at the time when they perished; for the bones of the young turtle are seen in the interior, with

* Fleming's Brit. Animals, p. 37; in which work may be seen many other cases enumerated.

† Quart. Journ. of Lit. Sci. &c., No. 15, p. 172. Oct. 1819.

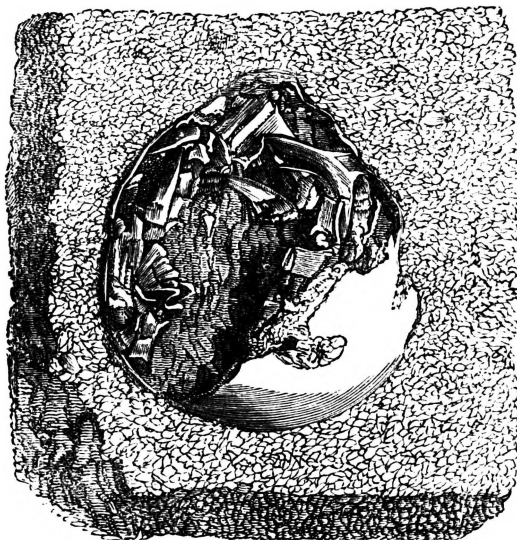
their shape fully developed, the interstices between the bones being entirely filled with grains of sand, which are cemented together, so that when the egg-shells are removed perfect casts of their form remain in stone. In the single specimen here figured (Fig. 68.), which is only five inches in its longest diameter, no less than seven eggs are preserved.*

Fig. 68.



Fossil eggs of Turtles from the Island of Ascension.†

Fig. 69.



One of the eggs in Fig. 68. of the natural size, showing the bones of the fetus which had been nearly hatched.

* The most conspicuous of the bones represented within the shell in Fig. 69, appear to be the clavicle and coracoid bone. They are hollow; and for this reason resemble, at first sight, the bones of birds rather than of reptiles; for the latter have no medullary cavity. Mr. Owen, of the College of Surgeons, in order to elucidate this point, dissected for me a very young turtle, and found that the exterior portion only of the bones was ossified, the interior being still filled with cartilage. This cartilage soon dried up, and shrank to a mere thread upon the evaporation of the spirits of wine in which the specimen had been preserved, so that in a short time the bones became as empty as those of birds.

† This specimen is in the possession of Mr. Carrier, of the Geological Society of London.

To explain the state in which they occur fossil, it seems necessary to suppose that after the eggs were almost hatched in the warm sand, a great wave threw upon them so much more sand as to prevent the rays of the sun from penetrating, so that the yolk was chilled and deprived of vitality. The shells were perhaps slightly broken at the same time, so that small grains of sand might gradually be introduced into the interior by water as it percolated through the beach.

Marine testacea.—The aquatic animals and plants which inhabit an estuary are liable, like the trees and land animals which people the alluvial plains of a great river, to be swept from time to time far into the deep; for as a river is perpetually shifting its course, and undermining a portion of its banks with the forests which cover them, so the marine current alters its direction from time to time, and bears away the banks of sand and mud, against which it turns its force. These banks may consist in great measure of shells peculiar to shallow, and sometimes brackish water, which may have been accumulating for centuries, until at length they are carried away and spread out along the bottom of the sea, at a depth at which they could not have lived and multiplied. Thus littoral and estuary shells are more frequently liable even than fresh-water species, to be intermixed with the exuviae of pelagic tribes.

After the storm of February 4, 1831, when several vessels were wrecked in the estuary of the Forth, the current was directed against a bed of oysters with such force, that great heaps of them were thrown *alive* upon the beach, and remained above high-water mark. I collected many of these oysters, as also the common eatable whelks (*buccina*), thrown up with them, and observed that, although still living, their shells were worn by the long attrition of sand which had passed over them as they lay in their native bed, and which had evidently not resulted from the mere action of the tempest by which they were cast ashore.

From these facts we learn that the union of the two parts of a bivalve shell does not prove that it has not been transported to a distance; and when we find shells worn, and with all their prominent parts rubbed off, they may still have been imbedded where they grew.

Burrowing shells.—It sometimes appears extraordinary, when we observe the violence of the breakers on our coast, and see the strength of the current in removing cliffs, and sweeping out new channels, that many tender and fragile shells should inhabit the sea in the immediate vicinity of this turmoil. But a great number of the bivalve testacea, and many also of the turbinated univalves, burrow in sand or mud. The solen and the cardium, for example, which are usually found in shallow water near the shore, pierce through a soft bottom without injury to their shells; and the pholas can drill a cavity through mud of considerable hardness. The species of these and many other tribes can sink, when alarmed, with

considerable rapidity, often to the depth of several feet, and can also penetrate upwards again to the surface, if a mass of matter be heaped upon them. The hurricane, therefore, may expend its fury in vain, and may sweep away even the upper part of banks of sand or mud, or may roll pebbles over them, and yet these testacea may remain below secure and uninjured.

Shells become fossil at considerable depths.—I have already stated that, at the depth of 950 fathoms, between Gibraltar and Ceuta, Captain Smyth found a gravelly bottom, with fragments of broken shells, carried thither probably from the comparatively shallow parts of the neighbouring straits, through which a powerful current flows. Beds of shelly sand might here, in the course of ages, be accumulated several thousand feet thick. But, without the aid of the drifting power of a current, shells may accumulate in the spot where they live and die, at great depths from the surface, if sediment be thrown down upon them; for even in our own colder latitudes, the depths at which living marine animals abound is very considerable. Captain Vidal ascertained, by soundings lately made off Tory Island, on the north-west coast of Ireland, that crustacea, star-fish, and testacea, occurred at various depths between fifty and one hundred fathoms; and he drew up dentalia from the mud of Galway bay in 230 and 240 fathoms water.

The same hydrographer discovered on the Rockall bank large quantities of shells at depths varying from 45 to 190 fathoms. These shells were for the most part pulverized, and evidently recent, as they retained their bright colours. In the same region a bed of fish-bones was observed extending for two miles along the bottom of the sea in eighty and ninety fathoms water. At the eastern extremity also of Rockall bank fish-bones were met with, mingled with pieces of fresh shell, at the depth of 235 fathoms.

Analogous formations are in progress in the submarine tracts extending from the Shetland Isles to the north of Ireland, wherever soundings can be procured. A continuous deposit of sand and mud, replete with broken and entire shells, echini, &c., has been traced for upwards of twenty miles to the eastward of the Faroe Islands, usually at the depth of from forty to one hundred fathoms. In one part of this tract (long. $6^{\circ}30'$, lat. $61^{\circ}50'$) fish-bones occur in extraordinary profusion, so that the lead cannot be drawn up without some vertebræ being attached. This "bone bed," as it was called by our surveyors, is three miles and a half in length, and forty-five fathoms under water, and contains a few shells intermingled with the bones.

In the British seas, the shells and other organic remains lie in soft mud or loose sand and gravel; whereas, in the bed of the Adriatic, Donati found them frequently inclosed in stone of recent origin. This is pre-

cisely the difference in character which we might have expected to exist between the British marine formations now in progress, and those of the Adriatic; for calcareous and other mineral springs abound in the Mediterranean and lands adjoining, while they are almost entirely wanting in our own country.

During his survey of the west coast of Africa, Captain Belcher found, by frequent soundings between the twenty-third and twentieth degrees of north latitude, that the bottom of the sea, at the depth of from twenty to about fifty fathoms, consists of sand with a great intermixture of shells, often entire, but sometimes finely comminuted. Between the eleventh and ninth degrees of north latitude, on the same coast, at soundings varying from twenty to about eighty fathoms, he brought up abundance of corals and shells mixed with sand. These also were in some parts entire, and in others worn and broken.

In all these cases, it is only necessary that there should be some deposition of sedimentary matter, however minute, such as may be supplied by rivers draining a continent, or currents preying on a line of cliffs, in order that stratified formations, hundreds of feet in thickness, and replete with organic remains, should result in the course of ages.

But, although some deposits may thus extend continuously for a thousand miles or more near certain coasts, the greater part of the bed of the ocean, remote from continents and islands, may very probably receive, at the same time, no new accessions of drift matter, all sediment being intercepted by intervening hollows. Erroneous theories in geology may be formed not only from overlooking the great extent of simultaneous deposits now in progress, but also from the assumption that such formations may be universal or coextensive with the bed of the ocean.*

* See Book IV. chap. iii., where this subject is discussed more fully.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FORMATION OF CORAL REEFS.

Reefs not formed in deep sea—Composed partly of shells—Conversion of a reef into an island—Extent and thickness of coral formations—The Maldiva Isles—Rate of growth of coral—Its geological importance—Circular and oval forms of coral islands (p. 174.)—Lagoons—Causes of their peculiar configuration—Why the windward side higher than the leeward—Stratification—That the subsidence by earthquakes in the Pacific exceeds the elevation—Henderson's Island—Coral on a high mountain in Otaheite—Coral and shell limestones now in progress—The hypothesis that the quantity of calcareous matter has been and is still on the increase, considered.

THE powers of the organic creation in modifying the form and structure of those parts of the earth's crust which may be said to be undergoing repair, or where new rock-formations are continually [in progress, are most conspicuously displayed in the labours of the coral animals. We may compare the operation of these zoophytes in the ocean to the effects produced on a smaller scale upon the land by the plants which generate peat. In the case of the *Sphagnum*, the upper part vegetates while the lower portion is entering into a mineral mass, in which the traces of organization remain when life has entirely ceased. In corals, in like manner, the more durable materials of the generation that has passed away serve as the foundation on which living animals are continuing to rear a similar structure.

The stony part of the zoophyte may be likened to an internal skeleton; for it is surrounded by a soft animal substance capable of expanding itself, and, when alarmed, of contracting and drawing itself almost entirely into the hollows of the hard coral. Although oftentimes beautifully coloured in their own element, the soft parts become when taken from the sea nothing more in appearance than a brown slime spread over the stony nucleus.*

It was the opinion of the German naturalist Forster, in 1780, after his voyage round the world with Captain Cook, that coral animals had the power of building up steep and almost perpendicular walls from great depths in the sea, a notion afterwards adopted by Captain Flinders and others; but it is now very generally supposed that these zoophytes cannot live in water of great depths, and can only incrust the tops of submarine mountains with a calcareous covering a few fathoms thick.

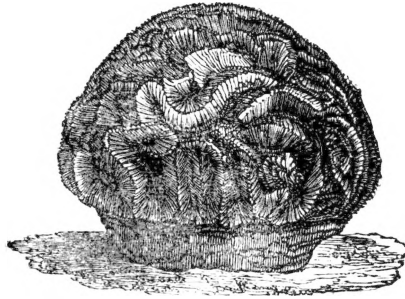
These views have been confirmed by Ehrenberg, who has lately devoted

* Ehrenberg, *Nat. und Bild. der Coralleninseln, &c.*, Berlin, 1834.

more than a year to the examination of the corals of the Red Sea ; but at the same time it must be remembered that strata of broken corals may accumulate to almost any thickness in the course of ages in the deep sea near the base of submarine mountains.

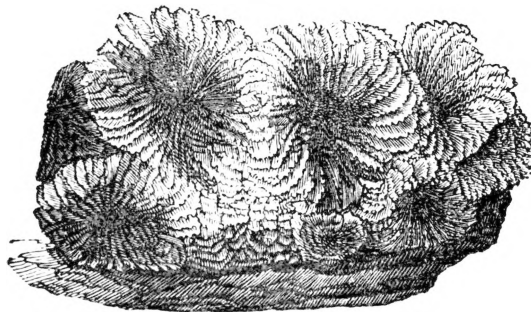
Composition of coral reefs.—The calcareous masses usually termed coral reefs are by no means exclusively the work of zoophytes ; a great variety of shells, and, among them, some of the largest and heaviest of known species, contribute to augment the mass. In the South Pacific, great beds of oysters, muscles, *pinnæ marinæ*, and other shells, cover in profusion almost every reef ; and on the beach of coral islands are seen the shells of echini and broken fragments of crustaceous animals. Large shoals of fish are also discernible through the clear blue water, and their teeth and hard palates are probably preserved, although a great portion of their soft cartilaginous bones decay.

Fig. 70.

*Meandrina labyrinthica*, Lam.

Of the numerous species of zoophytes which are engaged in the production of coral banks, some of the most common belong to the Lamarckian genera *Meandrina*, *Caryophyllia*, *Madrepora*, *Porites*, and *Astrea*, but especially the latter.

Fig. 71.

*Astrea dipsacca*, Lam.

Genera of Zoophytes most common in coral reefs.

Fig. 72.

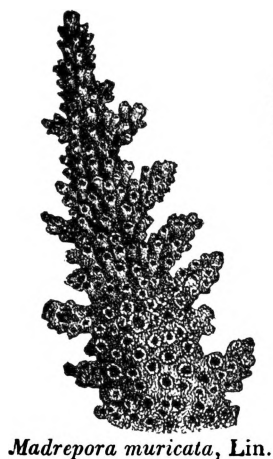
*Madrepora muricata*, Lin.

Fig. 73.

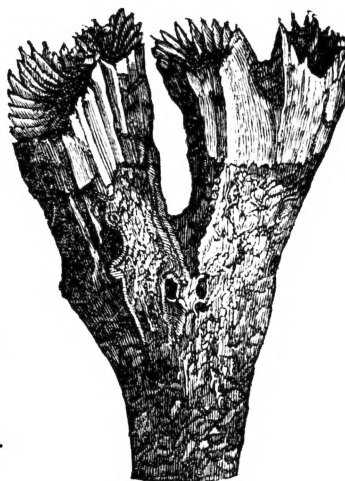
*Caryophyllia fastigiata*, Lam.

Fig. 74.

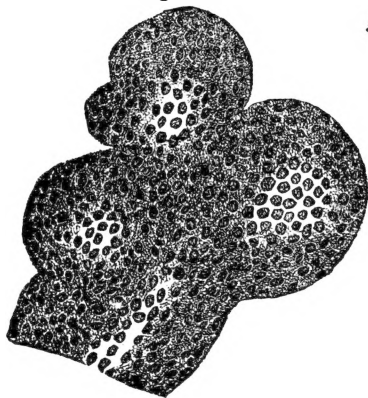
*Porites clavaria*, Lam.

Fig. 75.

*Oculina hirtella*, Lam.

How converted into islands.—In the Pacific the reefs, which just raise themselves above the level of the sea, are usually of a circular or oval form, and surrounded by a deep and often unfathomable ocean. In the centre of each, there is usually a comparatively shallow lagoon, where there is still water, and on the borders of which the smaller and more delicate kind of zoophytes find a tranquil abode, while the hardier species live on the exterior margin of the islet, where a great surf usually breaks. When the reef, says M. Chamisso, a naturalist who accompanied Kotzebue, is of such a height that it remains almost dry at low water, the corals leave off building. A continuous mass of solid stone is seen

composed of the shells of mollusks and echini, with their broken-off prickles and fragments of coral, united by calcareous sand produced by the pulverization of shells. Fragments of coral limestone are thrown up by the waves, until the ridge becomes so high that it is covered only during some seasons of the year by the high tides. The heat of the sun often penetrates the mass of stone when it is dry, so that it splits in many places. The force of the waves is thereby enabled to separate and lift blocks of coral, frequently six feet long and three or four in thickness, and throw them upon the reef. "After this the calcareous sand lies undisturbed, and offers to the seeds of trees and plants cast upon it by the waves a soil upon which they rapidly grow, to overshadow its dazzling white surface. Entire trunks of trees, which are carried by the rivers from other countries and islands, find here, at length, a resting-place after their long wanderings: with these come some small animals, such as lizards and insects, as the first inhabitants. Even before the trees form a wood, the sea-birds nestle here; strayed land-birds take refuge in the bushes; and, at a much later period, when the work has been long since completed, man appears, and builds his hut on the fruitful soil."*

In the above description the solid stone is stated to consist of shell and coral united by sand; but masses of very compact limestone are also found even in the uppermost and newest parts of the reef, such as could only have been produced by chemical precipitation. It is suggested that in these instances the carbonate of lime may have been derived from the decomposition of corals and testacea; for when the animal matter undergoes putrefaction, the calcareous residuum must be set free under circumstances very favourable to precipitation, especially when there are other calcareous substances, such as shells and corals, on which it may be deposited. Thus organic bodies may be inclosed in a solid cement, and become portions of rocky masses.†

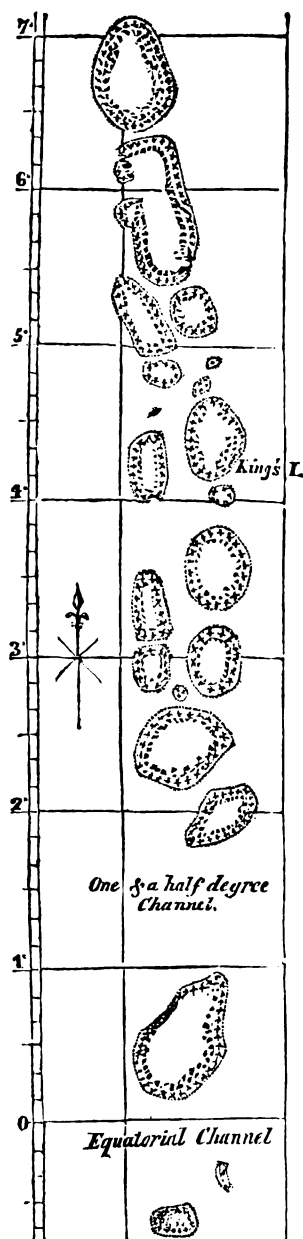
Lieutenant Nelson states that in the Bermuda islands the reefs assume the form of the bottom of the sea on which they rest; and among every variety of configuration it happens here and there that zones of coral inclose tranquil basins, within which the decomposition of numerous zoophytes produces a soft white calcareous mud resembling chalk. Some of this dried mud, now in the Museum of the Geological Society, is not distinguishable from some of the common soft chalk of England. In the same islands, also, several varieties of compact limestone are formed. Amongst other fossil bodies inclosed in the coral sandstones of this group are marine and terrestrial shells, corals, the hard parts of crabs, and the bones of birds.‡

* Kotzebue's *Voyages*, 1815-18, vol. iii. pp. 331-333.

† Stutchbury, *West of Eng. Journ.*, No. 1, p. 50.

‡ *Proceedings of Geol. Soc.*, No. 36, p. 81.

Fig. 76.



Extent and thickness.—The Pacific Ocean, throughout a space comprehended between the thirtieth parallel of latitude on each side of the equator, is extremely productive of coral; as also are the Arabian and Persian Gulfs. Coral is also abundant in the sea between the coast of Malabar and the island of Madagascar. Flinders describes an unbroken reef, 350 miles in length, on the east coast of New Holland; and between that country and New Guinea, Captain P. King found the coral formations to extend throughout a distance of 700 miles, interrupted by no intervals exceeding thirty miles in length.

Maldiva Isles.—The chain of coral reefs and islets, called the Maldivas (see. Fig. 76.), situated in the Indian Ocean, to the south-west of Malabar, form a chain 480 geographical miles in length, running due north and south. It is composed throughout of a series of circular assemblage of islets, the larger groups being from forty to fifty miles in their longest diameter. Capt. Horsburgh, whose chart of these islands is subjoined, informs me, that outside of each circle or atoll, as it is termed, there are coral reefs sometimes extending to the distance of two or three miles, beyond which there are no soundings at immense depths. But in the centre of each atoll there is a lagoon from fifteen to twenty fathoms deep. In the channels between the atolls, no soundings have been obtained at the depth of 150 fathoms.

Laccadive Islands.—The Laccadive islands run in the same line with the Maldivas, on the north, as do the isles of the Chagos Archipelago, on the south; so that these may be continuations of the same chain of submarine mountains, crested in a similar manner by coral limestones. Possibly they may all be the sum-

mits of volcanos; for, if Java and Sumatra were submerged, they would give rise to a somewhat similar shape in the bottom of the sea; since the volcanos of those islands observe a linear direction, and are often separated from each other by intervals, corresponding to those between the atolls of the Maldivas; and as they rise to various heights, from five to ten thousand feet above their base, they might leave an unfathomable ocean in the intermediate spaces.

In regard to the thickness of the masses of coral, MM. Quoy and Gaimard are of opinion, that the species which contribute most actively to the formation of solid masses do not grow where the water is deeper than twenty-five or thirty feet; but other competent observers declare that they reach to the depth of ninety feet, and even more.*

The branched madrepores live at the greatest depths, and may form the first foundation of a reef, and raise a platform on which other species may build.†

Rate of the growth of coral.—The rapidity of the growth of coral is by no means great, according to the report of the natives to Captain Beechey. In an island west of Gambier's group, our navigators observed the *Chama gigas* (Tridacna, Lam.), while the animal was yet living, so completely overgrown by coral, that a space only of two inches was left for the extremity of the shell to open and shut.‡ But conchologists suppose that the chama may require thirty years or more to attain its full size, so that the fact is quite consistent with a very slow rate of increase in the calcareous reefs.

At the island called 'Taaopoto, in the South Pacific, the anchor of a ship wrecked about fifty years before was observed in seven fathom water still preserving its original form, but entirely encrusted by coral.§ An oyster, which cannot have been more than two years old when taken, is preserved in the museum of the Bristol Institution, enveloped by a dense coral, a species of *Agaricia*, weighing 2 lb. 9 oz.||

In Captain Beechey's late expedition to the Pacific, no positive information could be obtained of any channel having been filled up within a given period; and it seems established, that several reefs had remained, for more than half a century, at about the same depth from the surface.

Ehrenberg also questions the fact of channels and harbours having been closed up in the Red Sea by the rapid increase of coral limestone. He supposes the notion to have arisen from the circumstance of havens having been occasionally filled up in some places with coral sand, in others with large quantities of ballast of coral rock thrown down from vessels. The same observer saw single corals of the genera *Meandrina* and *Favia*, having a globular form, from six to nine feet in diameter, which must, he says, be of immense antiquity, so that Pharaoh, he imagines, may have looked upon these same individuals in the Red Sea.¶

They certainly prove, as he remarks, that the reef on which they grow has increased at a very slow rate. After collecting more than 100 species, he found none of them covered with parasitic zoophytes, nor any instance of a living coral growing on another living coral. To this repul-

* Stutchbury, West of Eng. Journ., No. 1, p. 47.

† Journ. of Roy. Geograph. Soc. of London, 1831, p. 218.

‡ Beechey's Voyage to the Pacific, &c., p. 157.

§ Stutchbury, West of Eng. Journ., No. 1, p. 49.

|| Ibid., p. 51.

¶ Ehrenberg, as before cited, p. 41.

sive power which they exert whilst living against all others of their own class, we owe the beautiful symmetry of some large *Meandrinæ*, and other species which adorn our museums. Yet *balani* and *serpulæ* can attach themselves to corals, and holes are excavated in them by *saxicavous mollusca*.* The natives of the Bermuda Islands point out certain corals now growing in the sea, which, according to tradition, have been living in the same spots for centuries. It is supposed that some of them may vie in age with the most ancient trees of Europe.

But when we admit the increase of coral limestone to be slow, we are merely speaking with relation to periods of human observation. It often happens that parasitic testacea live and die on the shells of the larger slow-moving gasteropods in the South Seas, and become entirely inclosed in an incrustation of compact limestone, while the animal, to whose habitation they are attached, crawls about, and bears upon his back these shells, which may be considered as already fossilized. It is, therefore, probable, that the reefs increase as fast as is compatible with the thriving state of the organic beings which chiefly contribute to their formation: and if the rate of augmentation thus implied be called, in conformity to our ordinary ideas of time, gradual and slow, it does not diminish, in the least degree, the geological importance of such calcareous masses.

Suppose the ordinary growth of coral limestone to amount to six inches in a century, it will then require 3000 years to produce a reef fifteen feet thick: but have we any ground for presuming that, at the end of that period, or of ten times thirty centuries, there will be a failure in the supply of lime, or that the polyps and mollusks will cease to act, or that the hour of the dissolution of our planet will arrive, as the earlier geologists were fain to anticipate?

Instead of contemplating the brief annals of human events, let us turn to some natural chronometers; to the volcanic isles of the Pacific, for example, which shoot up some of them 10,000 feet or more above the level of the ocean. These islands bear evident marks of having been produced by successive volcanic eruptions; and coral reefs are sometimes found on the volcanic soil, reaching for some distance from the sea-shore into the interior. When we consider the time required for the accumulation of such mountain masses of igneous matter, according to the analogy of known volcanic agency, all idea of extenuating the comparative magnitude of coral limestones, on the ground of the slowness of the operations of lithogenous polyps, must instantly vanish.

Form of coral islands.—The information collected during the late expedition to the Pacific, throws much additional light on the peculiarities of form and structure of coral islands. Of thirty-two of these, examined by Captain Beechey, the largest was thirty miles in diameter, and the smallest less than a mile. They were of various shapes, all formed of living coral, except one, which, although of coral formation, was raised about

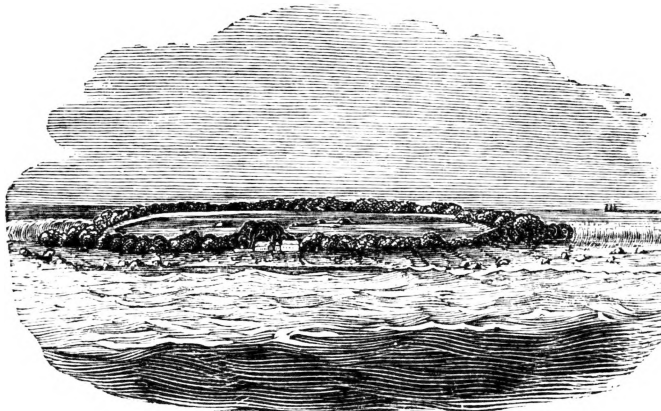
* Ehrenberg, as before cited, p. 42.

eighty feet above the level of the sea, and encompassed by a reef of living coral.* All were increasing their dimensions by the active operations of the lithophytes, which appeared to be gradually extending and bringing the immersed parts of their structure to the surface. Twenty-nine of the number had lagoons in their centres, which had probably existed in the others, until they were filled, in the course of time, by zoophytic and other substances.

In the above-mentioned islands, the strips of dry coral encircling the lagoons, when divested of loose sandy materials heaped upon them, are rarely elevated more than two feet above the level of the sea; and, were it not for the abrupt descent of the external margin which causes the sea to break upon it, these strips would be wholly inundated. Those parts of the strip which are beyond the reach of the waves are no longer inhabited by the animals that reared them, but have their cells filled with a hard calcareous substance, and present a brown rugged appearance. The parts which are still immersed, or which are dry only at low water, are intersected by small channels, and are so full of hollows, that the tide, as it recedes, leaves small lakes of water upon them. The width of the plain, or strip of dead coral, in the island which fell under Captain Beechey's observation, in no instance exceeded half a mile, from the usual wash of the sea to the edge of the lagoon, and, in general, was only about three or four hundred yards.† Beyond these limits the sides of the island descend rapidly, apparently by a succession of inclined ledges, each terminating in a precipice. The depth of the lagoons is various; in some, entered by Captain Beechey, it was from twenty to thirty-eight fathoms.

Whitsunday island.—In the annexed cut (Fig. 77.), one of these cir-

Fig. 77.



View of Whitsunday Island ‡

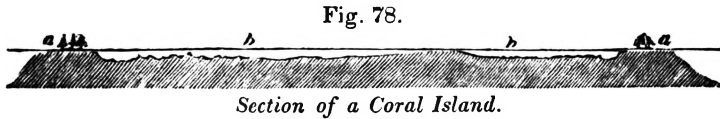
* This islet is called Henderson's, see p. 181.

† Captain Beechey, part i. p. 188.

‡ This plate and the section which follows are copied, by permission of Captain Beechey, from the illustrations of his valuable work before alluded to.

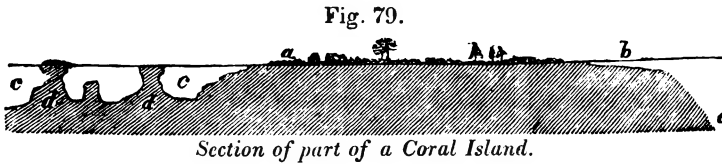
cular islands is represented just rising above the waves, covered with the cocoa-nut and other trees, and inclosing within a lagoon of tranquil water.

Sections of coral isles.—The accompanying section will enable the reader to comprehend the usual form of such islands. (Fig. 78.)



- a a.* Habitable part of the island, consisting of a strip of coral, inclosing the lagoon.
b b. The lagoon.

The subjoined cut (Fig. 79.) exhibits a small part of the section of a coral island on a larger scale.



- a b.* Habitable part of the island.
b c. Slope of the side of the island, plunging at an angle of forty-five to the depth of fifteen hundred feet.
c c. Part of the lagoon.
d d. Knolls of coral in the lagoon, with overhanging masses of coral resembling the capitals of columns.

Origin of their peculiar configuration.—The circular or oval forms of the numerous coral isles of the Pacific, with the lagoons in their centre, naturally suggest the idea that they are nothing more than the crests of submarine volcanos, having the rims and bottoms of their craters overgrown by coral. This opinion is strengthened by the conical form of the submarine mountain, and the steep angle at which it plunges on all sides into the surrounding ocean. It is also well known that the Pacific is a great theatre of volcanic action, and every island yet examined in the wide region termed Eastern Oceanica consists either of volcanic rocks or coral limestones.

It has also been observed that although, within the circular coral reefs, there is usually nothing discernible but a lagoon, the bottom of which is covered with coral, yet within some of these basins, as in Gambier's group, rocks composed of porous lava, and other volcanic substances, rise up, resembling the two Kamenis and other eminences of igneous origin, which have been thrown up within the times of history, in the midst of the Gulf of Santorin.*

It has been mentioned that in volcanic archipelagos there is generally

* See Vol. I. p. 363.

one large habitual vent, and many smaller volcanos formed at different points and at irregular intervals, all of which have usually a linear arrangement. Now, in several of the groups of Eastern Oceanica there appears to be a similar disposition; the great islands, such as Otaheite, Owhyhee, and Terra del Spirito Santo, being habitual vents, and the lines of small circular coral isles, which are dependent on them, being very probably trains of minor volcanos, which may have been in eruption singly and at irregular intervals.

The absence of circular groups in the West Indian seas, and the tropical parts of the Atlantic, where corals are numerous, has been adduced as an additional argument, inasmuch as volcanic vents, though existing in those regions, are very inferior in importance to those in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.* We are also informed by Ehrenberg, that all the banks of coral in the Red Sea, some of which are square, but most of them riband-like strips, have flat summits, and are without lagoons; a fact which seems to demonstrate that the stonemaking zoophytes do not of themselves build circular islets with a central cup-shaped cavity. It may be objected that the circles formed by some coral reefs or groups of coral islets, varying as they do from ten to thirty miles and upwards in diameter, are so great as to preclude the idea of their being volcanic craters. In regard to this objection, I may refer to what I have said in a former volume respecting the size of the so-called craters of elevation, many of which are, probably, the ruins of truncated cones.†

Openings into the lagoons.—There is yet another phenomenon attending the circular reefs, to which I have not alluded, viz., the deep narrow passage which almost invariably leads from the sea into the lagoon, and is kept open by the efflux of the sea at low tides. It is sufficient that a reef should rise a few feet above low-water mark to cause the waters to collect in the lagoon at high tide, and, when the sea falls, to rush out violently at one or more points where the reef happens to be lowest or weakest. At first there are probably many openings; but the growth of the coral tends to obstruct all those which do not serve as the principal channels of discharge; so that their number is gradually reduced to a few, and often finally to one. This event is strictly analogous to that witnessed in our estuaries, where a body of salt water accumulated during the flow issues with great velocity at the ebb of the tide, and scours out or keeps open a deep passage through the bar, which is almost always formed at the mouth of a river.

In controverting Von Buch's theory of "elevation craters," I mentioned, that a single deep gorge is described as always connecting the central cavity of such craters with the sea. The origin of this channel may be

* De la Beche, Geol. Man., p. 141, first ed.

† See Vol. I. p. 366.

sought in the action of the tides, which may, in many cases, afford a satisfactory explanation. Suppose a volcanic cone, having a deep crater, to be at first submarine, and to be then *gradually* elevated by earthquakes in an ocean where tides prevail, a ravine may be cut like that which penetrates into the Caldera of the isle of Palma. The opening would at first be made on that side where the rim of the crater was originally lowest, and it would afterwards be deepened as the island rose, so as always to descend somewhat lower than the level of the sea.

In the coral reefs surrounding those volcanic islands in the Pacific, which are large enough to feed small rivers, there is generally an opening or channel at the point where the stream of fresh water enters the sea. The depth of these channels rarely exceeds twenty-five feet; and they may be attributed, says Captain Beechey, to the aversion of the lithophytes to fresh-water, and to the probable absence of the mineral matter of which they construct their habitations.*

Why the windward side highest.—But there is yet another peculiarity of the low coral islands in the Pacific, the explanation of which is by no means so obvious. They follow one general rule in having their windward side higher and more perfect than the other. “At Gambier and Matilda islands this inequality is very conspicuous, the weather side of both being wooded, and of the former inhabited, while the other sides are from twenty to thirty feet under water; where, however, they may be perceived to be equally *narrow* and well defined. It is on the leeward side also that the entrances into the lagoons occur; and although they may sometimes be situated on a side that runs in the direction of the wind, as at Bow Island, yet there are none to windward.” These observations of Captain Beechey accord perfectly with those first made by Flinders on the Australian reefs, and which Captain Horsburgh, and other hydrographers, have made in regard to the coral islands of other seas. Thus the Chagos Isles in the Indian Ocean are chiefly of a horse-shoe form, the openings being to the north-west; whereas the prevailing wind blows regularly from the south-east. From this fortunate circumstance ships can enter and sail out again with ease; whereas if the narrow inlets were to windward, vessels which once entered might not succeed for months in making their way out again. The well-known security of many of these harbours depends entirely on this fortunate peculiarity in their structure.

In what manner is this singular conformation to be accounted for? The action of the waves is seen to be the cause of the superior elevation of some reefs on their windward sides, where sand and large masses of coral rock are thrown up by the breakers; but there is a variety of cases where this cause alone is inadequate to solve the problem; for reefs submerged at considerable depths, where the movements of the sea cannot exert much

* Voyage to the Pacific, &c., p. 194.

power, have, nevertheless, the same conformation, the leeward being much lower than the windward side.*

I am informed by Captain King, that, on examining the reefs called Rowley Shoals, which lie off the north-west coast of Australia, where the east and west monsoons prevail alternately, he found the open side of one crescent-shaped reef, the *Impérieuse*, turned to the east, and of another, the *Mermaid*, turned to the west; while a third oval reef, of the same group, was entirely submerged. This want of conformity is exactly what we should expect, where the winds vary periodically.

It seems impossible to refer the phenomenon now under consideration to any original uniformity in the configuration of submarine volcanos, on the summits of which we may suppose the coral reefs to grow; for although it is very common for craters to be broken down on one side only, we cannot imagine any cause that should breach them all in the same direction. But the difficulty will, perhaps, be removed, if we call in another part of the volcanic agency—subsidence by earthquakes. Suppose the windward barrier to have been raised by the mechanical action of the waves to the height of two or three yards above the wall on the leeward side, and then the whole island to sink down a few fathoms, the appearances described would then be presented by the submerged reef. A repetition of such operations, by the alternate elevation and depression of the same mass (an hypothesis strictly conformable to analogy), might produce still greater inequality in the two sides, especially as the violent efflux of the tide has probably a strong tendency to check the accumulation of the more tender corals on the leeward reef; while the action of the breakers contributes to raise the windward barrier.

In the Red Sea the banks of coral are, for the most part, only seen when the tide is out. Neither in the submerged banks, nor in such coral islets as are slightly elevated above the sea, is the windward side higher than the leeward, or that which is towards the coast, and protected from the breakers. The prevailing wind there is from the north.†

Stratification of coral formations.—The calcareous formations of the Pacific are probably all stratified, although single beds may sometimes attain a great thickness. The occasional drifting of sand from the exposed parts of a reef into the lagoon or the surrounding sea, would suffice to form occasional lines of partition, especially during violent tempests, which occur annually among the South Sea Islands. The decomposition of felspathic lavas may supply the current which washes and undermines the cliffs of some islands with fine clay; and this may be carried to great distances and deposited in distinct layers between calcareous masses, or may be mingled with them and form argillaceous limestones.

* Voyage to the Pacific, &c., p. 189.

† Ehrenberg, as before cited, p. 29.

Other divisions will arise from the arrangement of different species of testacea and zoophytes, which inhabit water of various depths, and which succeed each other as the sea is deepened by the fall of its bed during earthquakes, or in proportion as it grows shallower by elevation due to the same cause, or by the accumulation of organic substances raising the bottom.

To these causes of minor subdivision must be added another of great importance—the ejection of volcanic ashes and sand, often carried by the wind over wide areas, and the flowing of horizontal sheets of lava, which may interrupt suddenly the growth of one coral reef, and afterwards serve as a foundation for another. An example of this kind is seen in the Isle of France, where a bed of coral, ten feet thick, intervenes between two currents of lava;* and in the West Indies, in the island of Dominica, Maclure observes, that “a bed of coral and madrepore limestone, with shells, lies horizontally on a bed of cinders, about two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea, at Rousseau, and is covered with cinders to a considerable height.”†

Reefs in the Pacific.—The sunken reefs in the Pacific are sometimes of such extent that a series of ordinary earthquakes might, in the course of a few centuries, convert large tracts of them into dry land. It is therefore a remarkable circumstance that there should be so vast an area in Eastern Oceanica, studded with minute islands, without one single spot where there is a wider extent of land that belongs to such islands as Otaheite, Owhyhee, and a few others, which either have been or are still the seats of active volcanos. If an equilibrium only were maintained between the upheaving and depressing force of earthquakes, large islands would very soon be formed in the Pacific; for, in that case, the growth of limestone, the flowing of lava, and the ejection of volcanic ashes, would combine with the upheaving force to form new land.

Suppose the shoal, above described as 600 miles in length, to sink fifteen feet, and then to remain unmoved for a thousand years; during that interval the growing coral may again approach the surface. Then let the mass be re-elevated fifteen feet, so that the original reef is restored to its former position: in this case, the new coral formed since the first subsidence will constitute an island 600 miles long. An analogous result would have occurred if a lava-current fifteen feet thick had overflowed the submerged reef. The absence, therefore, of more extensive tracts of land in the Pacific seems to show that the amount of subsidence by earthquakes exceeds, in that quarter of the globe, at present the elevation due to the same cause.

* De la Beche, Geol. Man., p. 142. Quoy and Gaimard, Ann. des Sci. Nat., tome vi.

† Observ. on Geology of the West Indian Islands, Journ. of Sci., &c., No. x., p. 318.

Elizabeth, or Henderson's Island.—I mentioned that one of the thirty-two islands, examined by our navigators in the late expedition, was raised about eighty feet above the level of the sea.* It is called Elizabeth or Henderson's Island, and is five miles in length by one in breadth. It

Fig. 80.

*Elizabeth, or Henderson's Island.*

has a flat surface, and, on all sides, except the north, is bounded by perpendicular cliffs about fifty feet high, composed entirely of dead coral, more or less porous, honey-combed at the surface, and hardening into a compact calcareous mass, which possesses the fracture of secondary limestone, and has a species of millepore interspersed through it. These cliffs are considerably undermined by the action of the waves, and some of them appear on the eve of precipitating their superincumbent weight into the sea. Those which are less injured in this way present no alternate ridges or indication of the different levels which the sea might have occupied at different periods ; but a smooth surface, as if the island, which has probably been raised by volcanic agency, had been forced up by one great subterranean convulsion.†

At the distance of a few hundred yards from this island, no bottom could be gained with 200 fathoms of line. It will be seen, from the annexed sketch, communicated to me by Lieutenant Smith, of the Blossom, that the trees come down to the beach towards the centre of the island ; a break which at first sight resembles the openings which usually lead into lagoons : but the trees stand on a steep slope, and no hollow of an ancient lagoon was perceived. The reader will remark, that such a mass of limestone represents exactly those horizontal cappings of calcareous strata which we sometimes find on hills which have tabular summits.

As earthquakes are now felt from time to time in this part of the Pacific, and as indications of very recent changes of level are not wanting,‡ the era of the elevation of Henderson's Island may not be very remote.

We are informed by Mr. Stutchbury, that upon the summit of nearly the highest mountain in Tahiti (or Otaheite), an island composed almost entirely of volcanic rocks, there is a distinct stratum of fossil coral, showing that a great part, if not the whole, island has been raised from the sea, and does not consist merely of lava and scorix, thrown out by supramarine eruptions. Whether the species of coral were identical with those now living, or what was the exact height of the coral, was unfortu-

* According to some accounts, between sixty and seventy feet.

† Beechey's Voyage to the Pacific, &c., p. 46.

‡ Ibid., pp. 159 and 191.

nately not ascertained ; for Mr. Stutchbury did not visit the spot, though he saw some masses of the limestone which had fallen from the high mountain, and which appeared to him to resemble the coral of modern reefs. He supposed that the altitude of the highest peak in Otaheite was 12,000 feet, and that of the coral not greatly inferior ; but Captain Beechey informs me that the peak is not quite 7000 feet high, as he found, by the mean of three observations, carefully taken with the sextant. Mr. Stutchbury suggests that “ as a great reef, or platform of coral, surrounds the actual shores of Otaheite, the island, had it been raised out of the sea gradually, or by a succession of movements, must have been everywhere coated over with a covering of coral ; and as this is not the case, no coral having yet been seen in the interior, except on the mountain above mentioned, Otaheite must have been projected suddenly to its present height by a single upthrow.”*

Before we adopt so important a conclusion we must, in the first place, remember that the surface of a small part only of the island has been carefully explored by naturalists, and, what is far more to the point, we have yet to learn whether some craters in Otaheite may not have been in eruption subsequently to the emergence of the island. At a much lower elevation than the coral, Mr. Stutchbury states that there is an extinct volcanic crater, having at its bottom a lake, about a mile in diameter ; a fact also mentioned by Captain Beechey and others. Now in the volcanic island of Ischia, in the neighbourhood of Naples, some of the tuffs near the highest peak contain marine shells, similar to those now living in the Mediterranean ; so that these tuffs were evidently submarine deposits. Consequently Ischia has, like Otaheite, been raised to its present height above the level of the sea by a movement from below. But we know, partly by historical and partly by geological evidence, that many of the Ischian cones and craters have been in eruption since it emerged ; and during these eruptions its surface has been overspread with so dense a coating of lava and scoriæ, that it has now become impossible to determine whether the land rose suddenly or slowly, or what was the state of its surface when it first emerged. The same observations apply to Otaheite.

Vast area of coral formations.—The calcareous masses above considered constitute, together with the associated volcanic formations, the most extensive of the groups of rocks which can be demonstrated to be now in progress. The space in the sea which they occupy is so vast, that we may safely infer that they exceed in area any group of ancient rocks which can be proved to have been of contemporaneous origin. It is true that each of the great archipelagos of the Pacific are separated by unfathomable abysses, where no zoophytes may live, and no lavas flow ; where not even a particle of coral sand or volcanic scoriæ may be drifted :

* Stutchbury, West of Eng. Journ., No. 1, p. 55.

but still, if we confine our view to the extent of reef ascertained to exist, and assume that a certain space around each volcanic or coral isle has been covered with ejections, or matter from the waste of cliffs, it will then be seen that the space occupied by these formations may equal, and perhaps exceed in area, that part of our continents which has been accurately explored by geologists.

That the increase of these calcareous masses should be principally, if not entirely, confined to the shallower parts of the ocean, or, in other words, to the summits of submarine ranges of mountains and elevated platforms, is a circumstance of the highest interest to the geologist; for if parts of the bed of such an ocean should be upraised, so as to form large continents, mountain-chains might appear, capped and flanked by calcareous strata of great thickness, and replete with organic remains; while in the intervening lower regions no rocks of contemporary origin would ever have existed.

Lime, whence derived.—A modern writer has attempted to revive the theory of some of the earlier geologists, that all limestones have originated in organized substances. If we examine, he says, the quantity of limestone in the primary strata, it will be found to bear a much smaller proportion to the siliceous and argillaceous rocks than in the secondary; and this may have some connexion with the rarity of the testaceous animals in the ancient ocean. He further infers, that, in consequence of the operations of animals, “the quantity of calcareous earth deposited in the form of mud or stone is always increasing; and that, as the secondary series far exceeds the primary in this respect, so a third series may hereafter arise from the depths of the sea, which may exceed the last in the proportion of its calcareous strata.”*

If these propositions went no farther than to suggest that every particle of lime that now enters into the crust of the globe may possibly in its turn have been subservient to the purposes of life, by entering into the composition of organized bodies, I should not deem the speculation improbable; but, when it is hinted that lime may be an animal product combined by the powers of vitality from some simple elements, I can discover no sufficient grounds for such an hypothesis, and many facts which militate against it.

If a large pond be made, in almost any soil, and filled with rain water, it may usually become tenanted by testacea; for carbonate of lime is almost universally diffused in small quantities. But if no calcareous matter be supplied by waters flowing from the surrounding high grounds, or by springs, no tufa or shell-marl are formed. The thin shells of one generation of mollusks decompose, so that their elements afford nutriment to the succeeding races; and it is only where a stream enters a lake, which

* MacCulloch's Syst. of Geol., vol. i. p. 219.

may introduce a fresh supply of calcareous matter, or where the lake is fed by springs, that shells accumulate and form marl.

All the lakes in Forfarshire which have produced deposits of shell-marl have been the sites of springs, which still evolve much carbonic acid, and a small quantity of carbonate of lime. But there is no marl in Loch Fithie, near Forfar, where there are *no springs*, although that lake is surrounded by these calcareous deposits, and although, in every other respect, the site is favourable to the accumulation of aquatic testacea.

We find those charæ which secrete the largest quantity of calcareous matter in their stems to abound near springs impregnated with carbonate of lime. We know that, if the common hen be deprived altogether of calcareous nutriment, the shells of her eggs will become of too slight a consistency to protect the contents; and some birds eat chalk greedily during the breeding season.

If, on the other hand, we turn to the phenomena of inorganic nature, we observe that, in volcanic countries, there is an enormous evolution of carbonic acid, either free, in a gaseous form, or mixed with water; and the springs of such districts are usually impregnated with carbonate of lime in great abundance. No one who has travelled in Tuscany, through the region of extinct volcanos and its confines, or who has seen the map recently constructed by Targioni, to show the principal sites of mineral springs, can doubt, for a moment, that if this territory was submerged beneath the sea, it might supply materials for the most extensive coral reefs. The importance of these springs is not to be estimated by the magnitude of the rocks which they have thrown down on the slanting sides of hills, although of these alone large cities might be built, nor by a coating of travertin that covers the soil in some districts for miles in length. The greater part of the calcareous matter passes down in a state of solution to the sea; and a geologist might as well assume the mass of alluvium formed in a few years in the bed of the Po, or the Ganges, to be the measure of the quantity deposited in the course of centuries in the deltas of those rivers, as conceive that the influence of the carbonated springs in Italy can be estimated by the mass of tufa precipitated by them near their sources.

It is generally admitted that the abundance of carbonate of lime given out by springs, in regions where volcanic eruptions or earthquakes prevail, is referable to the solvent power of carbonic acid. For, as the acidulous waters percolate calcareous strata, they take up a certain portion of lime and carry it up to the surface, where, under diminished pressure in the atmosphere, it may be deposited, or, being absorbed by animals and vegetables, may be secreted by them. In Auvergne, springs charged with carbonate of lime rise through granite, in which case we must suppose the calcareous matter to be derived from some primary rock, unless we imagine it to rise up from the volcanic foci themselves.

We see no reason for supposing that the lime now on the surface, or in the crust of the earth, may not, as well as the silex, alumine, or any other mineral substance, have existed before the first organic beings were created, if it be assumed that the arrangement of the inorganic materials of our planet preceded in the order of time the introduction of the first organic inhabitants.

But if the carbonate of lime, secreted by the testacea and corals of the Pacific, be chiefly derived *from below*, and if it be a very general effect of the action of subterranean heat to subtract calcareous matter from the *inferior* rocks, and to cause it to ascend to the surface, no argument can be derived in favour of the progressive decrease of limestone from the magnitude of coral reefs, or the greater proportion of calcareous strata, in the more modern formations. We know of no recent argillaceous deposits derived from springs, and the siliceous matter which they hold in solution bears an extremely small proportion to the calcareous. The constant transfer, therefore, of carbonate of lime from the inferior parts of the earth's crust to its surface, must cause at all periods and throughout an indefinite succession of geological epochs, a preponderance of calcareous matter in the newer, as contrasted with the older formations.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

System of inquiry into the causes of geological phenomena as adopted in this work, how differing from that of many preceding writers—Illustrations from the history of Geology of the respective merits of the two systems—Reasons for prefixing to a work on Geology treatises respecting the changes now in progress in the animate and inanimate world.

HAVING considered, in the preceding books, the actual operation of the causes of change which affect the earth's surface and its inhabitants, we are now about to enter upon a new division of our inquiry ; and it may be useful to offer a few preliminary observations, to establish the connexion between two distinct parts of this work, and to explain in what manner its plan differs from that usually followed by preceding writers on Geology.

All naturalists who have carefully examined the arrangement of the mineral masses composing the earth's crust, and who have studied their internal structure and fossil contents, have recognised therein the signs of a great succession of former changes ; and the causes of these changes have been the object of anxious inquiry. As the first theorists possessed but a scanty acquaintance with the present economy of the animate and inanimate world, and the vicissitudes to which these are subject, we find them in the situation of novices, who attempt to read a history written in a foreign language, doubting about the meaning of the most ordinary terms ; disputing, for example, whether a shell was really a shell,—whether sand and pebbles were the result of aqueous trituration,—whether stratification was the effect of successive deposition from water ; and a thousand other elementary questions, which now appear to us so easy and simple, that we can hardly conceive them to have once afforded matter for warm and tedious controversy.

In the first book were enumerated many of the prepossessions which may have biassed the minds of the earlier inquirers, and checked an impartial desire of arriving at truth. But of all the causes alluded to, no one contributed so powerfully to give rise to a false method of philoso-

phizing, as the entire unconsciousness of the first geologists of the extent of their own ignorance respecting the operations of the existing agents of change.

They imagined themselves sufficiently acquainted with the mutations now in progress in the animate and inanimate world, to entitle them at once to determine whether the solution of certain problems in geology could ever be derived from the observation of the actual economy of nature; and, having decided that they could not, they felt themselves at liberty to indulge their imaginations in guessing at what *might be*, rather than in inquiring *what is*; in other words, they employed themselves in conjecturing what might have been the course of nature at a remote period, rather than in the investigation of what was the course of nature in their own times.

It appeared to them more philosophical to speculate on the possibilities of the past, than patiently to explore the realities of the present; and having invented theories under the influence of such maxims, they were consistently unwilling to test their validity by the criterion of their accordance with the ordinary operations of nature. On the contrary, the claims of each new hypothesis to credibility appeared enhanced by the great contrast of the causes or forces introduced to those now developed in our terrestrial system during a period, as it has been termed, of *repose*.

Never was there a dogma more calculated to foster indolence, and to blunt the keen edge of curiosity, than this assumption of the discordance between the former and the existing causes of change. It produced a state of mind unfavourable in the highest degree to the candid reception of the evidence of those minute but incessant alterations which every part of the earth's surface is undergoing, and by which the condition of its living inhabitants is continually made to vary. The student, instead of being encouraged with the hope of interpreting the enigmas presented to him in the earth's structure,—instead of being prompted to undertake laborious inquiries into the natural history of the organic world, and the complicated effects of the igneous and aqueous causes now in operation; was taught to despond from the first. Geology, it was affirmed, could never rise to the rank of an exact science,—the greater number of phenomena must for ever remain inexplicable, or only be partially elucidated by ingenious conjectures. Even the mystery which invested the subject was said to constitute one of its principal charms, affording, as it did, full scope to the fancy to indulge in a boundless field of speculation.

The course directly opposed to these theoretical views consists in an earnest and patient endeavour to reconcile the former indications of change with the evidence of gradual mutations now in progress; restricting us, in the first instance, to known causes, and then speculating on those which may be in activity in regions inaccessible to us. It seeks an interpretation of geological monuments, by comparing the changes of

which they give evidence with the vicissitudes now in progress, or *which may be* in progress.

I shall give a few examples in illustration of the practical results already derived from the two distinct methods of theorizing; for we have now the advantage of being enabled to judge of their respective merits, by the relative value of the fruits which they have produced.

From the historical sketch before given of the progress of geology, the reader has seen that a controversy was maintained for more than a century respecting the origin of fossil shells and bones—were they organic or inorganic substances? That the latter opinion should for a long time have prevailed, and that these bodies should have been supposed to be fashioned into their present form by a plastic virtue, or some other mysterious agency, may appear absurd; but it was, perhaps, as reasonable a conjecture as could be expected from those who did not appeal, in the first instance, to the analogy of the living creation, as affording the only source of authentic information. It was only by an accurate examination of living testacea, and by a comparison of the osteology of the existing vertebrated animals with the remains found entombed in ancient strata, that this favourite dogma was exploded, and all were, at length, persuaded that these substances were exclusively of organic origin.

In like manner, when a discussion had arisen as to the nature of basalt and other mineral masses, evidently constituting a particular class of rocks, the popular opinion inclined to a belief that they were of aqueous, not of igneous origin. These rocks, it was said, might have been precipitated from an aqueous solution, from a chaotic fluid, or an ocean which rose over the continents, charged with the requisite mineral ingredients. Few will now dispute that it would have been difficult to invent a theory more distant from the truth; yet we must cease to wonder that it gained so many proselytes, when we remember that its claims to probability arose partly from the very circumstance of its confirming the assumed want of analogy between geological causes and those now in action.

By what train of investigation were all theorists brought round, at length, to an opposite opinion, and induced to assent to the igneous origin of these formations? By an examination of the structure of active volcanos, the mineral composition of their lavas and ejections, and by comparing the undoubted products of fire with the ancient rocks in question.

I shall adduce one more example. When the organic origin of fossil shells had been conceded, their occurrence in strata forming some of the loftiest mountains in the world was admitted as a proof of a great alteration of the relative level of sea and land; and the question then arose, whether this change was to be accounted for by the partial drying up of the ocean, or by the elevation of the solid land. The former hypothesis, although afterwards abandoned by general consent, was at first embraced by a vast majority. A multitude of ingenious speculations were hazarded,

to show how the level of the ocean might have been depressed; and when these theories had all failed, the inquiry, as to what vicissitudes of this nature might now be taking place, was, as usual, resorted to in the last instance. On inquiring, whether any changes in the level of sea and land had occurred during the historical period, it was soon discovered, by patient research, that considerable tracts of land had been permanently elevated and depressed, while the level of the ocean remained unaltered. It was therefore necessary to reverse the doctrine which had acquired so much popularity; and the unexpected solution of a problem at first regarded as so enigmatical gave, perhaps, the strongest stimulus ever yet afforded to investigate the ordinary operations of nature.

Of late years, the points of discussion in geology have been transferred to new questions, and those, for the most part, of a higher and more general nature. We are now nearly agreed as to what rocks are of igneous, and what of aqueous origin,—in what manner fossil shells, whether of the sea or of lakes, have been imbedded in strata,—how sand may have been converted into sandstone,—and are unanimous as to many other propositions which are not of a complicated nature; but when we ascend to those of a higher order, we are still too often reluctant to make a strenuous effort, in the first instance, to search out an explanation in the ordinary economy of Nature. If, for example, we seek for the causes why mineral masses are associated together in certain groups; why they are arranged in a certain order, which is never inverted; why there are many breaks in the continuity of the series; why different organic remains are found in distinct sets of strata; why there is often an abrupt passage from an assemblage of species contained in one formation to that in another immediately superimposed,—when these, and other topics of an equally extensive kind are discussed, we often find the habit of indulging conjectures, respecting irregular and extraordinary causes, to be still in force.

We hear of sudden and violent revolutions of the globe—of the instantaneous elevation of mountain chains—of paroxysms of volcanic energy, declining, according to some, and, according to others, increasing in violence, from the earliest to the latest ages. We are also told of general catastrophes, and a succession of deluges—of the alternation of periods of repose and disorder—of the refrigeration of the primitive heated nucleus of the globe—of the sudden annihilation of whole races of animals and plants—and other hypotheses, in which we see the ancient spirit of speculation revived, and a desire manifestly shown to cut, rather than patiently to untie, the Gordian knot.

In the following attempt to unravel these difficult questions, I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to restrict myself to the known or possible operations of existing causes; feeling assured that we have not yet exhausted the resources which the study of the present course of nature may provide, and therefore that we are not authorized, in the infancy of

our science, to recur to extraordinary agents. I shall adhere to this plan, not only on the grounds explained in the First Book, but because, as I have just stated, the history of the science informs us that this method has always put geologists on the road that leads to truth—suggesting views which, although imperfect at first, have been found capable of improvement, until at last adopted by universal consent. On the other hand, the opposite method, that of speculating on a former distinct state of things and causes, has led invariably to a multitude of contradictory systems, which have been overthrown one after the other,—which have been found quite incapable of modification,—and which are often required to be precisely reversed.

In regard to the subjects treated of in the last two books,—the recent changes of the organic and inorganic world,—they may be said to constitute the alphabet and grammar of geology. If I had found systematic treatises previously written on these topics, I should willingly have entered at once upon the description of geological monuments properly so called: in which case I should have referred to other authors for the elucidation of elementary and collateral questions, just as I shall now appeal to the best authorities in conchology and comparative anatomy for the proof of positions which, but for the labours of naturalists devoted to those departments, would have demanded long digressions.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIALS COMPOSING THE EARTH'S CRUST.

The existing continents chiefly composed of subaqueous deposits—Distinction between sedimentary and volcanic rocks—Between primary, secondary, and tertiary—Origin of the rocks usually termed primary—Transition formations (p. 194.)—Secondary and tertiary strata—Chronological relations of mineral masses—Laws of superposition—Relative age proved by included fragments of older rocks—Proofs of contemporaneous origin derived from mineral characters—from organic remains (p. 198.)—Zoological provinces of limited extent—Modes whereby dissimilar mineral masses and distinct groups of species may be proved to have been contemporaneous.

WHEN we examine into the structure of the earth's crust, or that small portion of the exterior of our planet accessible to human observation, whether we pursue our inquiries by aid of mining operations, or by

observing the sections laid open in the sea cliffs, or in the deep ravines of mountainous countries, we discover everywhere a series of mineral masses, which are not thrown together in a confused heap, but arranged with considerable order; and even where their original position has undergone great subsequent disturbance, there still remain proofs of the order that once reigned.

If we drain a lake, we frequently find at the bottom a series of recent deposits disposed with great regularity one above the other; the uppermost, perhaps, may be a stratum of peat, next below a more compact variety of the same material, still lower a bed of laminated shell marl alternating with peat, and then other beds of marl divided by layers of clay. Now if a second pit be sunk through the same continuous lacustrine deposit, at some distance from the first, we commonly meet with nearly the same series of beds, yet with slight variations; some, for example, of the layers of sand, clay, or marl may be wanting, one or more of them having thinned out and given place to others, or sometimes one of the masses, first examined, is observed to increase in thickness to the exclusion of other beds. At length we reach a point where the whole assemblage of lacustrine strata terminate, as, for example, when we arrive at the borders of the original lake-basin. Here the beds come in contact with the rocks which form the boundary of, and at the same time pass under, all the recent accumulations.

In almost every estuary, we may observe at low water phenomena analogous to those of lakes, where the current has cut away part of some newly formed bank, consisting of a series of horizontal strata of peat, sand, clay, and sometimes interposed beds of shells. Each of these may often be traced over a considerable area, some extending farther than others, but all of necessity confined within the basin of the estuary. Similar remarks are applicable, on a much more extended scale, to the recent deltas of great rivers, like the Ganges, where, after the periodical inundations have subsided, sections are exposed in the river-banks and cliffs of numerous islands, in which horizontal beds of clay and sand may be traced over areas many hundred miles in length, and more than a hundred in breadth.

Subaqueous deposits.—The greater parts of our continents are evidently composed of subaqueous deposits; and in the manner of their arrangement we discover many characters precisely similar to those above described; but the different groups of strata are, for the most part, on a greater scale, both in regard to depth and area, than any observable in the formations of lakes, deltas, or estuaries. We find, for example, masses of limestone several hundred feet in thickness, containing corals and shells, and stretching from one country to another; yet always giving place, at length, to a distinct set of strata, which either rise up from beneath like the rocks before alluded to as forming the boundary of a lake, or cover

and conceal them. In other places, we find beds of pebbles and sand, or of clay, of great thickness. The different formations composed of these materials usually contain some peculiar and appropriate organic remains; as, for example, certain species of shells and corals, or certain plants.

Volcanic rocks.—Besides these strata of aqueous origin, we find other rocks which are immediately recognised to be the products of fire, from their exact resemblance to those which have been produced in modern times by volcanos, and thus we immediately establish two distinct orders of mineral masses composing the crust of the globe—the sedimentary and the volcanic.

Rocks commonly called primary.—But if we examine a large portion of a continent which contains within it a lofty mountain range, we rarely fail to discover another class of rocks very distinct from either of those above alluded to, and which we can assimilate neither to deposits such as are now accumulated in lakes or seas, nor to those generated by ordinary volcanic action. This class consists of granite, granitic schist, roofing-slate, and many other rocks, of a much more compact and crystalline texture than the sedimentary and volcanic divisions before mentioned. In the unstratified portion of these crystalline masses, as in the granite, for example, no organic fossil remains have ever been discovered, and only a few faint traces of them in some of the *stratified* groups of the same class; for I may remark, that a considerable portion of these rocks are divided, not only into strata, but into laminæ, so closely imitating the internal arrangement of well-known aqueous deposits, as to leave scarcely any reasonable doubt that they owe this part of their texture to similar causes.

These remarkable formations have been called *primitive*, from their having been supposed to constitute the most ancient mineral productions of the globe, and from a notion that they originated before the earth was inhabited by living beings, and while yet the planet was in a nascent state. The high relative antiquity of some of them is indisputable; for in the oldest sedimentary strata, containing organic remains, we often meet with rounded pebbles of the crystalline rocks, which must therefore have been consolidated before the derivative strata were formed out of their ruins. The members of this granitic group generally rise up from beneath the rocks of mechanical origin, entering into the structure of lofty mountains, so as to occupy, at the same time, the lowest and most elevated position in the crust of the globe.

Origin of rocks called primary.—Nothing strictly analogous to these crystalline formations can now be seen in the progress of formation on the habitable surface of the earth—nothing, at least, within the range of human observation. The first speculators, however, in geology found no difficulty in explaining their origin, by supposing a former condition of the planet perfectly distinct from the present, when certain chemical processes were developed on a great scale, whereby crystalline precipitates

were formed, some more suddenly, in huge amorphous masses, such as granite; others by successive deposition and with a foliated and stratified structure, as in the rocks termed gneiss and mica-schist. A great part of these views have since been abandoned, more especially with regard to the origin of granite; but it is interesting to trace the train of reasoning by which they were suggested. First, the stratified primitive rocks exhibited, as was before mentioned, well-defined marks of successive accumulation, analogous to those so common in ordinary subaqueous deposits. As the latter formations were found divisible into natural groups, characterized by certain peculiarities of mineral composition, so also were the primitive. In the next place, there were discovered, in many districts, certain members of the so-called primitive series, either alternating with or passing by intermediate gradations into rocks of a decidedly mechanical origin, containing traces of organic remains. From such gradual passage the aqueous origin of the stratified crystalline rocks was fairly inferred; and as we find in the different strata of subaqueous origin every gradation between a mechanical and a purely crystalline texture, between sand, for example, and saccharoid gypsum, so it was imagined that, in a former state of the planet, the different degrees of crystallization in the older rocks might have been dependent on the varying conditions of the menstruum from which they were precipitated.

The presence, however, of certain crystalline ingredients in the composition of many of the primary rocks rendered it necessary to resort to many arbitrary hypotheses, in order to explain their precipitation from aqueous solution; and for this reason a difference in the condition of the planet, and in the pristine energy of chemical causes, was assumed. A train of speculation originally suggested by the observed effects of aqueous agents was thus pushed beyond the limits of analogy; and it was not until a different and almost opposite course of induction was pursued, beginning with an examination of volcanic products, that more sound theoretical views were established.

Granite of igneous origin.—A passage was first traced from lava into other more crystalline igneous rocks, and from these again to granite, which last was found to send forth dykes and veins into the contiguous strata, in a manner strictly analogous to that observed in volcanic rocks, and to produce at the point of contact such changes as might be expected to result from the influence of a heated mass cooling down slowly under great pressure from a state of fusion. The want of stratification in granite supplied another point of analogy in confirmation of its igneous origin; and as some masses were found to send out veins through others, it was evident that there were granites of different ages; and that instead of forming in all cases the oldest part of the earth's crust, as had at first been supposed, some granites were of comparatively recent origin, and newer

than the stratified rocks which covered them and were pierced by granite veins.

Stratified crystalline rocks.—The theory of the origin of the other crystalline rocks was soon modified by these new views respecting the nature of granite. First it was shown, by numerous examples, that ordinary volcanic dikes might produce great alteration in the sedimentary strata which they traversed, causing them to assume a more crystalline texture, and nearly obliterating all traces of organic remains, without, at the same time, destroying the surfaces of stratification. It was also found that granite dikes and veins produced analogous, though somewhat different changes; and hence it was suggested as highly probable that the effects to which small veins gave rise, to the distance of a few yards, might be superinduced on a much grander scale where vast masses of fused rock, intensely heated for ages, came in contact at great depths from the surface with sedimentary formations. The slow action of heat in such cases, it was thought, might occasion a state of semi-fusion; so that, on the cooling down of the masses, the different materials might be arranged in new forms, according to their chemical affinities, and all traces of organic remains might disappear, while the stratiform and lamellar texture remained.

According to these views, the primary strata may have assumed their crystalline structure at as many successive periods as there have been distinct eras of the formation of granite; and their difference of mineral composition may be attributed, not to an original difference of the conditions under which they were deposited at the surface, but to subsequent modifications superinduced by heat and other causes at great depths below the surface.

The strict propriety of the term primitive, as applied to granite, and to the granitiform and associated rocks, thus became questionable; and the term primary was very generally substituted, as simply expressing the fact that the crystalline rocks, *as a mass*, were older than the *secondary*, or those which are unequivocally of a mechanical origin and contain organic remains.

Transition formations.—It has been stated that the crystalline or primary series sometimes passes by intermediate gradations into strata of mechanical origin containing organic remains. The formations of intermediate character by which that passage was effected were often observed to partake, in a perplexing degree, of the characters of the crystalline series and of those containing fossils. They were termed by Werner “transition rocks;” and he imagined that as gneiss and mica-schist had been precipitated from the waters of the first universal and chaotic ocean, so this ocean still continued to throw down some crystalline matter after the waters were inhabited by a few of the first created marine animals,

and when the waves and currents had already begun to transport sand and mud, and deposit them at the bottom of the sea.

The question whether the mineral peculiarities of the rocks called transition have been derived from subsequent modifications, which sedimentary strata may in the course of ages undergo, or from some original and essential difference in their composition and structure, is one which cannot be discussed here, as it is connected with inquiries into the nature of the granitic schists which must be deferred to the end of this work.

All the stratified rocks not arranged either in the primary or transition class, were at first called secondary, a division including nearly the whole of the fossiliferous strata then known; but after some progress had been made in classifying the secondary rocks, and in assigning to each its relative place in a chronological series, another division of sedimentary formations was established, called *tertiary*, as being of newer origin than the secondary, and characterized by distinct species of fossil animals and plants. These tertiary formations were found to consist very generally of detached and isolated masses, surrounded on all sides by primary and secondary rocks, and occupying a position, in reference to the latter, very like that of the waters of lakes, inland seas, and gulfs, in relation to a continent, and, like such waters, being often of great depth, though of limited area. The imbedded organic remains were chiefly those of marine animals, but with frequent intermixtures of terrestrial and fresh-water species which are rarely found among the secondary fossils. Frequently there was evidence of the deposits having been purely lacustrine, a circumstance which had not been clearly ascertained in regard to any secondary group.

I shall consider more particularly in the fourth chapter, how far this distinction of rocks into secondary and tertiary is founded in nature, and in what relation these two great divisions may be supposed to stand to each other.

But before I offer any general views of this kind, it will be necessary to explain to the student in what manner the geologist can determine the chronological relations of mineral masses composing the crust of the earth; for as different rocks have been formed in succession, one of the principal objects in geological investigations is to determine the time as well as the mode of their formation.

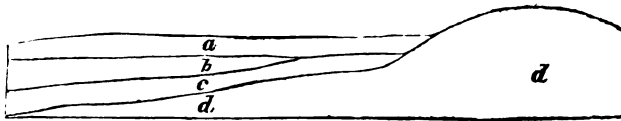
Proofs of relative Age by Superposition.

It is evident that, where we find a series of horizontal strata of sedimentary origin, the uppermost bed must be newer than those which it overlies; and that, when we observe one distinct set of strata reposing upon another, the inferior is the older of the two. In countries where the original position of mineral masses has been disturbed, at different

periods, by convulsions of extraordinary violence, as in the Alps and other mountainous districts, there are instances where the original position of strata has been reversed. Such exceptions, however, are rare, and usually on a small scale; and an experienced observer can generally ascertain the true relations of the rocks in question, by examining some adjoining districts where the derangement has been less extensive.

Soon after the first observers had convinced themselves that strata of aqueous origin were divisible into different groups, each characterized by its peculiar fossils and mineral characters, they also ascertained that there was a determinate order of succession in these groups, which was never inverted, although the different formations were not co-extensively distributed; so that, if there be four different formations, as *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, in the annexed diagram (Fig. 81.), which, in certain localities, may be seen in

Fig. 81.



vertical superposition, the uppermost or newest of them, *a*, will in other places be in contact with *c*, or with the lowest of the whole series, *d*, all the intermediate formations being absent.

In regard to the age of volcanic formations, if we find a layer of tuff or ejected matter, or a stream of lava covering sedimentary strata, we may infer, with confidence, that the igneous rock is the more recent; but, on the other hand, the superposition of aqueous deposits to a volcanic mass does not always prove the superimposed beds to be of newer origin. If, indeed, we discover strata of tuff with imbedded shells, or, as in the Vicentine and other places, rolled blocks of lava, with adhering shells and corals, we may then be sure that these masses of volcanic origin covered the bottom of the sea before the superincumbent strata were thrown down. But, as lava rises from below, and does not always reach the surface, it may sometimes penetrate a certain number of strata, and then cool down, so as to constitute a solid mass of newer origin, although inferior in position. It is, for the most part, by the passage of veins proceeding from such igneous rocks through contiguous sedimentary strata, or by such hardening and other alteration of the overlying bed as might be expected to result from contact with a heated mass, that we are enabled to decide whether the volcanic matter was previously consolidated, or subsequently introduced.

Proofs by included Fragments of older Rocks.

A geologist is sometimes at a loss, after investigating a district composed of two distinct formations, to determine the relative ages of each,

from want of sections exhibiting their superposition. In such cases, another kind of evidence, of a character no less conclusive, can sometimes be obtained. One group of strata has frequently been derived from the degradation of another in the immediate neighbourhood, and may be observed to include within it fragments of such older rocks. Thus, for example, we may find chalk with flints; and, in another part of the same country, a distinct series, consisting of alternations of clay, sand, and pebbles. If some of these pebbles consist of flints, with fossil shells of the same species as those in the chalk, we may confidently infer that the chalk is the oldest of the two formations.

I have already remarked, that some granite must have existed before the most ancient of our secondary rocks, because some of the latter contain rounded pebbles of granite. But for the existence of such evidence, we might not have felt assured that all the granite which we see was not protruded from below in a state of fusion, subsequently to the origin of the secondary strata.

Proofs of contemporaneous Origin derived from Mineral Characters.

When we have established the relative age of two formations in a given place, from direct superposition, or by other evidence, a far more difficult task remains,—to trace the continuity of the same formation, or, in other cases, to find means of referring detached groups of rocks to a contemporaneous origin. Such identifications of age are chiefly derivable from two sources,—mineral character and organic contents; but the utmost skill and caution are required in the application of these tests, for scarcely any general rules can be laid down respecting either that do not admit of important exceptions.

If at certain periods of the past, rocks of peculiar mineral composition had been precipitated simultaneously upon the floor of a “universal ocean,” so as to invest the whole earth in a succession of concentric coats, the determination of relative dates in geology might have been a matter of the greatest simplicity. To explain, indeed, the phenomenon would have been difficult, or rather, impossible, as such appearances would have implied a former state of the globe, without any analogy to that now prevailing. Suppose, for example, there were three masses extending over every continent,—the upper of chalk and chloritic sand; the next below, of blue argillaceous limestone; and the third and lowest, of red marl and sandstone: we must imagine that all the rivers and currents of the world had been charged, at the first period, with red mud and sand; at the second, with blue calcareo-argillaceous mud; and at a subsequent epoch, with chalky sediment and chloritic sand.

But, if the ocean were universal, there could have been no land to waste away by the action of the sea and rivers, and, therefore, no known

source whence the homogeneous sedimentary matter could have been derived. Few, perhaps, of the earlier geologists went so far as to believe implicitly in such universality of formations, but they inclined to an opinion that they were continuous over areas almost indefinite; and since such a disposition of mineral masses would, if true, have been the least complex, and most convenient for the purposes of classification, it is probable that a belief in its reality was often promoted by the hope that it might prove true. As to the objection, that such an arrangement of mineral masses could never result from any combination of causes now in action, it never weighed with the earlier cultivators of the science, since they indulged no expectation of being ever able to account for geological phenomena by reference to the known economy of nature. On the contrary, they set out, as we have already seen, with the assumption that the past and present conditions of the planet were too dissimilar to admit of exact comparison.

But, if we inquire into the true composition of any stratum, or set of strata, and endeavour to pursue these continuously through a country, we often find that the character of the mass changes gradually, and becomes at length so different that we should never have suspected its identity, if we had not been enabled to trace its passage from one form to another.

We soon discover that rocks dissimilar in mineral composition have originated simultaneously: we find, moreover, evidence in certain districts of the recurrence of rocks of precisely the same mineral character at very different periods; as, for example, two formations of red sandstone, with a great series of other strata intervening between them. Such repetitions might have been anticipated, since these red sandstones are produced by the decomposition of granite, gneiss, and mica-schist; and districts composed exclusively of these must again and again be exposed to decomposition, and to the erosive action of running water.

But, notwithstanding the variations before alluded to in the composition of one continuous set of strata, many rocks retain the same homogeneous structure and composition throughout considerable areas, and frequently, after a change of mineral character, preserve their new peculiarities throughout other tracts of great extent. Thus, for example, we may trace a limestone for a hundred miles, and then observe that it becomes more arenaceous, until it finally passes into sand or sandstone. We may then follow the last-mentioned formation throughout another district as extensive as that occupied by the limestone first examined.

Proofs of contemporaneous Origin derived from Organic Remains.

I devoted several chapters in the last book to show that the habitable surface of the sea and land may be divided into a considerable number of distinct provinces, each peopled by a peculiar assemblage of animals and

plants, and I endeavoured to point out the origin of these separate divisions. It was shown that climate is only one of many causes on which they depend ; and that difference of longitude, as well as latitude, is generally accompanied by a dissimilarity of indigenous species of organic beings.

As different seas, therefore, and lakes are inhabited at the same period, by different species of aquatic animals and plants, and as the lands adjoining these may be peopled by distinct terrestrial species, it follows that distinct organic remains are imbedded in contemporaneous deposits. If it were otherwise—if the same species abounded in every climate, or even in every part of the globe where a corresponding temperature and other conditions favourable to their existence were found, the identification of mineral masses of the same age, by means of their included organic contents, would be a matter of much greater facility. But, fortunately, the extent of the same zoological provinces, especially those of marine animals, is very great ; so that we are entitled to expect, from analogy, that the identity of fossil species, throughout large areas, will often enable us to connect together a great variety of detached formations.

Thus, for example, it will be seen, by reference to the second book, that deposits now forming in different parts of the Mediterranean, as in the deltas of the Rhone and the Nile, are distinct in mineral composition ; for calcareous rocks are precipitated from the waters of the Rhone, while pebbles are carried into its delta, and there cemented, by carbonate of lime, into a conglomerate ; whereas strata exclusively of soft mud and fine sand are formed in the Nilotic delta. The Po, again, carries down fine sand and mud into the Adriatic ; but since this sediment is derived from the degradation of a different assemblage of mountains from those drained by the Rhone or the Nile, we may safely assume that there will never be an exact identity in their respective deposits.*

If we pass to another quarter of the Mediterranean, as, for example, to the sea on the coast of Campania, or near the base of Etna in Sicily, or to the Grecian archipelago, we find in all these localities that distinct combinations of rocks are in progress. Occasional showers of volcanic ashes are falling into the sea, and streams of lava are overflowing its bottom ; and in the intervals between volcanic eruptions, beds of sand and clay are frequently derived from the waste of cliffs, or the turbid waters of rivers. Limestones, moreover, such as the Italian travertins, are here and there precipitated from the waters of mineral springs, while shells and corals accumulate in various places. Yet the entire Mediterranean, where the above-mentioned formations are simultaneously in progress, may be considered as one zoological province ; for, although certain species of testacea and zoophytes may be very local, and each region may probably have some species peculiar to it, still a considerable number are

* Vol. I. pp. 217. 220. 222.

common to the whole sea. If, therefore, at some future period, the bed of this inland sea should be converted into land, the geologist might be enabled, by reference to organic remains, to prove the contemporaneous origin of various mineral masses throughout a space equal in area to a great portion of Europe. The Black Sea, moreover, is inhabited by so many species identical with those of the Mediterranean, that the deltas of the Danube and the Don might, by the same evidence, be shown to have originated simultaneously.

Such identity of fossils, I may remark, not only enables us to refer to the same era distinct rocks widely separated from each other in the horizontal plane, but also others which may be considerably distant in the vertical series. Thus, for example, we may find alternating beds of clay, sand, and lava, two thousand feet in thickness, the whole of which may be proved to belong to the same epoch, by the specific identity of the fossil shells dispersed throughout the whole series.

The reader, however, will perceive, by referring to what was before said of zoological provinces,* that they are sometimes separated from each other by very narrow barriers, and for this reason contiguous rocks may be formed at the same time, differing widely both in mineral contents and organic remains. Thus, for example, the testacea, zoophytes, and fish of the Red Sea are, as a group, very distinct from those inhabiting the adjoining parts of the Mediterranean, although the two seas are separated only by the narrow isthmus of Suez. Calcareous formations have accumulated, on a great scale, in the Red Sea, in modern times, and fossil shells of existing species are well preserved therein;† and we know that, at the mouth of the Nile, large deposits of mud are amassed, including the remains of Mediterranean species. Hence it follows that if, at some future period, the bed of the Red Sea should be laid dry, the geologist might experience great difficulties in endeavouring to ascertain the relative age of these formations, which, although dissimilar both in organic and mineral characters, were of synchronous origin.

But we must not forget that the north-western shores of the Arabian Gulf, the plains of Egypt, and the isthmus of Suez, are all parts of one province of *terrestrial* species. Small streams, therefore, occasional land-floods, and those winds which drift clouds of sand along the deserts, might carry down into the Red Sea the same shells of fluviatile and land testacea which the Nile is sweeping into its delta, together with some remains of terrestrial plants, whereby the groups of strata, before alluded to, might notwithstanding the discrepancy of their mineral composition, and *marine* organic fossils, be shown to have belonged to the same epoch.

In like manner, the rivers which descend into the Carribean Sea and Gulf of Mexico on one side, and into the Pacific on the other, carry down

* See ante, p. 55.

† See Chap. X.

the same fluvial and terrestrial spoils into seas which are inhabited by different groups of marine species.

But it will much more frequently happen, that the co-existence of *terrestrial* species of distinct zoological and botanical provinces will be proved by the specific identity of the *marine* organic remains which inhabited the intervening space. Thus, for example, the distinct terrestrial species of the south of Europe, north of Africa, and north-west of Asia, might all be shown to have been contemporaneous, if we suppose the rivers flowing from these three countries to carry the remains of different species of the animal and vegetable kingdoms into the Mediterranean.

In like manner the sea intervening between the northern shores of Australia and the islands of the Indian Ocean contains a great proportion of the same species of corallines and testacea; yet the *land animals and plants* of the two regions are very dissimilar, even the islands nearest to Australia, as Java, New Guinea, and others, being inhabited by a distinct assemblage of terrestrial species. It is well known that there are calcareous rocks, volcanic tuff, and other strata in progress, in different parts of these intermediate seas, wherein marine organic remains might be preserved and associated with the terrestrial fossils above alluded to.

As it frequently happens that the barriers between different provinces of animals and plants are not very strongly marked, especially where they are determined by differences of temperature, there will usually be a passage from one set of species to another, as in a sea extending from the temperate to the tropical zone. In such cases, we may be enabled to prove, by the fossils of intermediate deposits, the connexion between the distinct provinces, since these intervening spaces will be inhabited by many species, common both to the temperate and equatorial seas.

On the other hand, we may be sometimes able, by aid of a peculiar homogeneous deposit, to prove the former co-existence of distinct animals and plants in distant regions. Suppose, for example, that in the course of ages the sediment of the river, like that of the Red River in Louisiana, is dispersed over an area several hundred leagues in length, so as to pass from the tropics into the temperate zone, the fossil remains imbedded in red mud might indicate the different forms which inhabited, at the same period, those remote regions of the earth.

It appears, then, that mineral and organic characters, although often inconstant, may nevertheless enable us to establish the contemporaneous origin of formations in distant countries. The same species of organic beings probably extend over wider areas than deposits of homogeneous composition; and if so, they will be of more importance in geological classification even than mineral peculiarities; but it fortunately may happen that where the one criterion fails, we may often avail ourselves of the other. Thus, for example, sedimentary strata are as likely to preserve the same colour and composition in a part of the ocean reaching from the borders of the tropics to the temperate zone, as in any other quarter of

the globe ; but in such spaces the variation of species is always most considerable.

In conclusion, it may be observed, that in endeavouring to prove the contemporaneous origin of strata in remote countries by organic remains, we must form our conclusions from a great number of species, since a single species may be enabled to survive vicissitudes in the earth's surface whereby thousands of others are exterminated. When a change of climate takes place, some may migrate and inhabit other latitudes, and so abound there as to become characteristic in those regions of strata of a subsequent era.

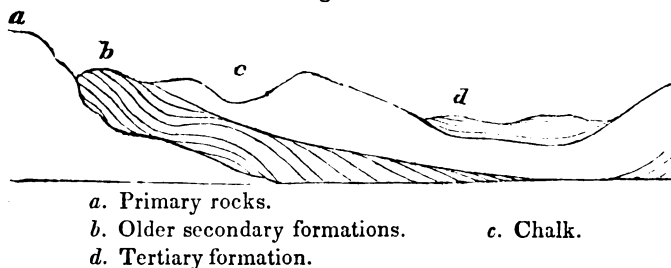
CHAPTER III.

Discovery of tertiary groups of successive periods—Paris basin—London and Hampshire basins—Tertiary strata of Bordeaux, Piedmont, Touraine, &c.—Subapennine beds—English crag (p. 205.)—More recent deposits of Sicily, &c.

HAVING in the last chapter considered some of the general rules which may enable the geologist to determine with accuracy the chronological relations of distinct sets of strata, I shall return to the history and discovery of the tertiary strata.

Paris Basin.—The first series of deposits belonging to the tertiary class, of which the characters were accurately determined, were those which occur in the neighbourhood of Paris, first described by MM. Cuvier and Brongniart.* They were ascertained to fill a depression in the chalk

Fig. 82.



(as the beds *d*, in Fig. 82, rest upon *c*), and to be composed of different materials, sometimes including the remains of marine and sometimes of fresh-water animals. By the aid of these fossils, several distinct alterna-

* Environs de Paris, 1811.

tions of marine and fresh-water formations were clearly shown to lie superimposed upon each other, and various speculations were hazarded respecting the manner in which the sea had successively abandoned and regained possession of tracts which had been occupied in the intervals by the waters of rivers or lakes. In one of the subordinate members of this Parisian series, a great number of scattered bones and skeletons of land animals were found entombed, the species being perfectly dissimilar to any known to exist, as indeed were those of almost all the animals and plants of which any portions were discovered in the associated deposits.

I must defer, to another part of this work, a more detailed account of this interesting formation, and shall merely observe, in this place, that the investigation of the fossil contents of these beds forms an era in the progress of the science. The French naturalists brought to bear upon their geological researches so much skill and proficiency in comparative anatomy and conchology, as to place in a strong light the importance of the study of organic remains, and the comparatively subordinate interest attached to the exclusive investigation of the structure and mineral ingredients of rocks.

A variety of tertiary formations were soon afterwards found in other parts of Europe, as in the south-east of England, in Italy, Austria, and different parts of France, especially in the basins of the Loire and Gironde, all strongly contrasted with the secondary rocks. As in the latter class many different divisions had been observed to preserve the same mineral characters and organic remains over wide areas, it was natural that an attempt should first be made to trace the different subdivisions of the Parisian tertiary strata throughout Europe, for some of these were not inferior in thickness to several of the secondary formations which had a wide range.

But in this case the analogy, however probable, was not found to hold good; and the error, though almost unavoidable, retarded seriously the progress of geology. As often as a new tertiary group was discovered, as that of Italy, for example, an attempt was invariably made, in the first instance, to discover in what characters it agreed with some one or more subordinate members of the Parisian type. Every fancied point of correspondence was magnified into undue importance; and such trifling circumstances, as the colour of a bed of sand or clay, were dwelt upon as proofs of identity, while the general difference in the mineral character and organic contents of the group from the whole Parisian series was slurred over and thrown into the shade.

By the influence of this allusion, the succession and chronological relations of different tertiary groups were kept out of sight. The difficulty of clearly discerning these arose from the frequent isolation of the position of the tertiary formations before described, since, in proportion as the areas occupied by them are limited, it is rare to discover a place

where one set of strata overlap another, in such a manner that the geologist might be enabled to determine the difference of age by direct superposition.

THE EUROPEAN TERTIARY STRATA FORMED AT SUCCESSIVE PERIODS.

I shall now very briefly enumerate some of the principal steps which eventually led to a conviction of the necessity of referring the European tertiary formations to distinct periods, and the leading data by which such a chronological series may be established.

London and Hampshire basins.—Very soon after the investigation, before alluded to, of the Parisian strata, those of Hampshire and of the basin of the Thames were examined in our own country. Mr. Webster found these English tertiary deposits to repose, like those of France, upon the chalk, or newest rock of the secondary series. He identified a great number of the shells occurring in the British and Parisian strata, and ascertained that, in the Isle of Wight, an alternation of marine and fresh-water beds occurred, very analogous to that observed in the basin of the Seine.* But no two sets of strata could well be more dissimilar in mineral composition, and they were only recognised to belong to the same era by aid of the specific identity of their organic remains. The discordance, in other respects, was as complete as could well be imagined, for the principal marine formation in the one country consisted of blue clay, in the other of white limestone; and a variety of curious rocks in the neighbourhood of Paris had no representatives whatever in the south of England.

Subapennine beds.—The next important discovery of tertiary strata was in Italy, where Brocchi traced them along the flanks of the Apennines, from one extremity of the peninsula to the other, usually forming a lower range of hills, called by him the Subapennines.† These formations, it is true, had been pointed out by the older Italian writers; and some correct ideas, as we have seen, had been entertained respecting their recent origin, as compared to the inclined secondary rocks on which they rested.‡ But accurate data were now for the first time collected, for instituting a comparison between them and other members of the great European series of tertiary formations.

Brocchi came to the conclusion that nearly one-half of several hundred species of fossil shells procured by him from these Subapennine beds were identical with those now living in existing seas, an observation which did not hold true in respect to the organic remains of the Paris basin.

* Webster in Englefield's Isle of Wight and Geol. Trans., vol. ii. p. 161.

† Conch. Foss. Subap., 1814.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 60, for opinions of Odoardi in 1761.

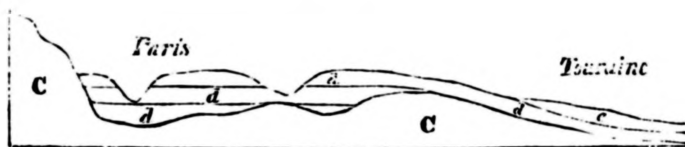
It might have been supposed that this important point of discrepancy would at once have engendered great doubt as to the identity, in age, of any part of the Subapennine beds with any one member of the Parisian series; but, for the reasons above alluded to, this objection was not thought of much weight, and it was supposed that a group of strata, called "the upper marine formation," in the basin of the Seine, might be represented by all the Subapennine clays and yellow sand.

English Crag.—Several years before, an English naturalist, Mr Parkinson, had observed that certain shelly strata, in Suffolk, which lay over the blue clay of London, contained distinct fossil species of testacea, and that a considerable portion of these might be identified with species now inhabiting the neighbouring sea.* These overlying beds, which were provincially termed "crag," were of small thickness, and were not regarded as of much geological importance. But, when duly considered, they presented a fact worthy of great attention, viz., the superposition of a tertiary group, inclosing, like the Subapennine beds, a great intermixture of recent species of shells, upon tertiary beds wherein a very few remains of recent or living species were entombed.

Mr. Conybeare, in his excellent classification of the English strata,† placed the crag as the uppermost of the British series; and several geologists began soon to entertain an opinion that this newest of our tertiary formations might correspond in age to the Italian strata described by Brocchi.

Tertiary strata of Touraine.—The next step towards establishing a succession of tertiary periods was the evidence adduced to prove that certain formations more recent than the uppermost members of the Parisian series, were also older than the Subapennine beds, so that they constituted deposits of an age intermediate between the two types above alluded to. M. Desnoyers, for example, ascertained that a group of marine strata, in Touraine, in the basin of the Loire (*e*, Fig 83.), rest upon the uppermost

Fig. 83.



C. Chalk and other secondary formations.

d. Tertiary formation of Paris basin.

e. Superimposed marine tertiary beds of the Loire.

subdivision of the Parisian group *d*, which consists of a lacustrine formation, extending continuously throughout a platform which intervenes

* Geol. Trans., vol. i. p. 324, 1811.

† Outlines of the Geology of England and Wales, 1822.

between the basin of the Seine and that of the Loire. These overlying marine strata M. Desnoyers assimilated to the English crag, to which they bear some analogy, although their organic remains differ considerably, as will be afterwards shown.

A large tertiary deposit had already been observed in the south-west of France, around Bordeaux and Dax, and a description of its fossils had been published by M. de Basterot.* Many of the species were peculiar, and differed from those of the strata now called Subapennine; yet these same peculiar and characteristic fossils reappeared in Piedmont, in a series of strata inferior in position to the Subapennines (as *e* underlies *f*, Fig 84.).

Fig. 84.



- C. Chalk and older formations.
- d. London clay (older tertiary).
- e. Tertiary strata of same age as beds of the Loire.
- f. Crag and Subapennine tertiary deposits.

This inferior group, *e*, composed principally of green sand, occurs in the hills of Mont Ferrat, and beds of the same age are seen in the valley of the Bormida. They also form the hill of the Superga, near Turin, where Signor Bonelli first formed a large collection of their fossils, and identified them with those discovered near Bordeaux and in the basin of the Gironde.†

But we are indebted to M. Deshayes for having proved, by a careful comparison of the entire assemblage of shells found in the above-mentioned localities, in Touraine, in the south-west of France, and in Piedmont, that the whole of these three groups possess the same zoological characters, and belong to the same epoch, as also do the shells described by M. Constant Prevost, as occurring in the basin of Vienna.‡

Now the reader will perceive, by reference to the observations above made, and to the accompanying diagrams, that one of the formations of this intervening period, *e*, has been found superimposed upon the highest member of the Parisian series, *d*; while another of the same set has been observed to underlie the Subapennine beds, *f*. Thus the chronological series, *d*, *e*, *f*, is made out, in which the deposits, originally called tertiary, those of the Paris and London basins, for example, occupy the lowest

* Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris, tome ii., 1825.

† For farther notice of the labours of Signor Bonelli and others on this subject, see post., ch. v.

‡ Sur la Constitution, &c. du Bassin de Vienne, Journ. de Phys., Nov. 1820.

position, and the beds called “the crag,” and “the Subapennines,” the highest.

Tertiary strata newer than the Subapennine.—The fossil remains which characterize each of the three successive periods above alluded to, approximate more nearly to the assemblage of *species* now existing, in proportion as their origin is less remote from our own era, or, in other words, the recent species are always more numerous, and the extinct more rare, in proportion to the low antiquity of the formation. But the discordance between the state of the organic world indicated by the fossils of the Subapennine beds and the actual state of things is still considerable, and we naturally ask, are there no monuments of an intervening period?—no evidences of a gradual passage from one condition of the animate creation to that which now prevails, and which differs so widely?

It will appear, in the sequel, that such monuments are not wanting, and that there are marine strata entering into the composition of extensive districts, and of hills of no trifling height, which contain the exuvæ of testacea and zoophytes, hardly distinguishable, as a group, from those now peopling the neighbouring seas. Thus the line of demarcation between the actual period and that immediately antecedent, is quite evanescent, and the newest members of the tertiary series will be often found to blend with the formations of the historical era.

In Europe, these modern strata have been found in the district round Naples, in the territory of Otranto and Calabria, and more particularly in the island of Sicily; and the bare enumeration of these places cannot fail to remind the reader, that they belong to regions where the volcano and the earthquake are now active, and where we might have anticipated the discovery of emphatic proofs that the conversion of sea into land had been of frequent occurrence at very modern periods.

CHAPTER IV.

DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE SECONDARY AND TERTIARY FORMATIONS MAY HAVE ORIGINATED.

Secondary series formed when the ocean prevailed; tertiary during the conversion of sea into land, and the growth of a continent—Origin of interruption in the sequence of formations—The areas where new deposits take place are always shifting—Causes of this—Denudation augments the discordance in the age of rocks in contact (p. 212.)—Unconformability of overlying formations—In what manner the shifting of the areas of sedimentary deposition may combine with the gradual extinction and introduction of species to produce a series of deposits having distinct mineral and organic characters.

I HAVE already glanced at the origin of some of the principal points of difference in the characters of the primary and secondary rocks, and may now briefly consider the relation in which the secondary stand to the tertiary, and the causes of that succession of tertiary formations, which has been described in the last chapter.

It is evident that large parts of Europe must have been sea at one and the same time when different portions of the secondary series were formed, because we find homogeneous mineral masses, including the remains of similar marine animals, referable to the secondary period, extending over great areas; whereas the detached and isolated position of the tertiary groups, in basins, or depressions bounded by secondary and primary rocks, favours the hypothesis of a sea interrupted by extensive tracts of dry land.

State of the Surface when the Secondary Strata were formed.

Let us consider the changes that must be expected to accompany the gradual conversion of part of the bed of an ocean into a continent, and the different characters that might be imparted to subaqueous deposits formed during the period when the sea prevailed, as contrasted with those that might belong to the subsequent epoch when the land should predominate. First, we may suppose a vast submarine region, such as the bed of the western Atlantic, to receive for ages the turbid waters of several great rivers, like the Amazon, Orinoco, or Mississippi, each draining a considerable continent. The sediment thus introduced might be characterized by a peculiar colour and composition, and the same homogeneous mixture might be spread out over an immense area by the action of a powerful current, like the Gulf-stream. First, one submarine basin, and then another, might be filled, or rendered shallow, by the influx of transported

matter, the same species of animals and plants still continuing to inhabit the sea ; so that the organic, as well as the mineral characters, might be constant throughout the whole series of deposits.

In another part of the same ocean, let us suppose masses of coralline and shelly limestone to grow, like those of the Pacific, simultaneously over a space several thousand miles in length, and thirty or forty degrees of latitude in breadth ; while volcanic eruptions give rise, at different intervals, to igneous rocks, having a common character in different parts of the vast area. It is evident that, during such a state of a certain quarter of the globe, limestone and other rocks might be formed, and retain a common character over spaces equal to a large portion of Europe.

State of the Surface when the Tertiary Groups were formed.

But, when by the instrumentality of causes now in action, in the manner already described, the area under consideration began to be converted into land, a very different condition of things must succeed. A series of subterranean movements might first give rise to small rocks and islets, and then, by subsequent elevations, to larger islands, by the junction of those first raised. These lands would consist partly of the mineral masses before described, whether coralline, sedimentary, or volcanic, and partly of the subjacent rocks, whatever they may have been, which constituted the original bed of the ocean. Now the degradation of these lands would commence immediately upon their emergence, the waves of the sea undermining the cliffs, and torrents flowing from the surface, so that new strata would begin to form in different places, at the bottom of the still remaining seas ; and, in proportion as the lands increased, these deposits would augment.

At length, by the continued rising and sinking of different parts of the bed of the ocean, a number of distinct basins would be formed, wherein different kinds of sediment, each distinguished by some local character might accumulate. Some of the groups of islands that had first risen would, in the course of ages, become the central mountain ranges of continents, and different lofty chains might thus be characterized by similar rocks of contemporaneous origin, the component strata having originated under analogous circumstances in the ocean before described.

Finally, when large tracts of land existed, there would be a variety of disconnected gulfs, inland seas, and lakes, each receiving the drainage of distinct hydrographical basins, and becoming the receptacles of stratified matter, distinguished by marked peculiarities of mineral composition. The organic remains would also be more varied, for in one locality fresh-water species would be imbedded, as in the deposits now forming in the lakes of Switzerland in the north of Italy ; in another, marine species, as in the Aral and Caspian ; in a third region, gulfs of brackish water would

be converted into land, like those of Bothnia and Finland in the Baltic ; in a fourth, there might be great fluviatile and marine formations along the borders of a chain of inland seas, like the deltas now growing at the mouths of the Don, Danube, Nile, Po, and Rhone, along the shores of the Sea of Azof, the Euxine, and Mediterranean. These deposits would each partake more or less of the peculiar mineral character of adjoining lands, the degradation of which would supply sediment to the different rivers.

Now, if such be, in a great measure, the distinction between the circumstances under which the secondary and tertiary series originated, it is quite natural that particular tertiary groups should occupy areas of comparatively small extent—that they should frequently consist of littoral and lacustrine deposits—and that they should often contain those admixtures of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine remains, which are so rare in secondary rocks. It might also be expected that the tertiary volcanic formations should be much less exclusively submarine ; and this we accordingly find to be the case.

Causes of the Superposition of successive Formations having distinct Mineral and Organic Characters.

But we have still to account for those remarkable breaks in the series of superimposed formations, which are common both to the secondary and tertiary rocks, but are more particularly frequent in the latter. The elucidation of this curious point is the more important, because some geologists appeal to phenomena of this kind in support of their doctrine of sudden revolutions of the globe, and great catastrophes out of the ordinary course of nature.

It is only by carefully considering the combined action of all the causes of change now in operation, whether in the animate or inanimate world, that we can hope to explain such complicated appearances as are exhibited in the general arrangement of mineral masses. In attempting, therefore, to trace the origin of these violations of continuity, we must recur to many of the topics treated of in the two last books, such as the effects of the various agents of decay and reproduction, the imbedding of organic remains, and the extinction of species.

Shifting of the areas of sedimentary deposition.—By reverting to our survey of the destroying and renovating agents, it will be seen that the surface of the terraqueous globe may be divided into two parts, one of which is undergoing repair, while the other, constituting, at any one period, by far the larger portion of the whole, is either suffering degradation, or remaining stationary without loss or increment. The reader will assent at once to this proposition, when he reflects that the dry land is, for the most part, wasting by the action of rain, rivers, and torrents ; and

that part of the bed of the sea is exposed to the excavating action of currents, while the greater part, remote from continents and islands, receives no new deposits. For as a turbid river throws down all its sediment into the first lake which it traverses, so currents flowing from the land or from shoals purge themselves from foreign ingredients in the first deep basin which they enter, and beyond this the blue waters of the ocean may for ages remain clear to the greatest depths. If there are any relics of organic beings at the bottom, they may decompose like the leaves of the forest in autumn, leaving no vestige behind, but merely supplying nourishment, by their decomposition, to succeeding races of marine animals and plants.

The other part of the terraqueous surface is the receptacle of new deposits; and in this portion alone, as I pointed out in the last book, the remains of animals and plants become fossilized. Now the position of this area, where new formations are in progress, and where alone any memorials of the state of organic life are preserved, is always varying, and must forever continue to vary: and, for the same reason, that portion of the terraqueous globe which is undergoing waste also shifts its position, and these fluctuations depend partly on the action of aqueous, and partly of igneous causes.

In illustration of these positions, I may observe, that the sediment of the Rhone, which is thrown into the Lake of Geneva, is now conveyed to a spot a mile and a-half distant from that where it accumulated in the tenth century, and six miles from the point where the delta began originally to form. We may look forward to the period when the lake will be filled up, and then a sudden change will take place in the distribution of the transported matter; for the mud and sand brought down from the Alps will thenceforth, instead of being deposited near Geneva, be carried nearly two hundred miles southwards, where the Rhone enters the Mediterranean.

The additional matter thus borne down to the lower delta of the Rhone would not only accelerate its increase, but might affect the mineral character of the strata there deposited, and thus give rise to an upper group, or subdivision of beds, having a distinct character. But the filling up of a lake, and the consequent transfer of the sediment to a new place, may sometimes give rise to a still more abrupt transition from one group to another; as, for example, in a gulf like that of the St. Lawrence, at the head of which no deposits are now accumulated, the river being purged of all its impurities in its previous course through the Canadian lakes. Should the lowermost of these lakes be at any time filled up with sediment, or laid dry by earthquakes, the waters of the river would thenceforth become turbid, and strata would begin to be deposited in the gulf, where a new formation would immediately overlie the ancient rocks now constituting the bottom. In this case there would be an abrupt passage from the inferior and more ancient, to the newer superimposed formation.

The same sudden coming on of new sedimentary deposits, or the suspension of those which were in progress, must frequently occur in different submarine basins where the prevailing currents are always liable, in the course of ages, to change their direction. Suppose, for instance, a sea to be filling up in the same manner as the Adriatic, by the influx of the Po, Adige, and other rivers. The deltas, after advancing and converging, may at last come within the action of a transverse current, which may arrest the further deposition of matter, and sweep it away to a distant point. Such a current now appears to prey upon the delta of the Nile, and to carry eastward the annual accessions of sediment that once added rapidly to the plains of Egypt.

On the other hand, if a current charged with sediment vary its course,—a circumstance which, as I have shown, must happen to all of them in the lapse of ages,—the accumulation of transported matter will at once cease in one region, and commence in another.

Although the causes which occasion the transference of the places of sedimentary depositions are continually in action in every region, yet they are particularly influential where subterranean movements alter, from time to time, the levels of land; and their effect must be very great during the successive elevations and depressions which must be supposed to accompany the rise of a great continent from the deep. A trifling change of level may sometimes throw a current into a new direction, or alter the course of a considerable river. Some tracts will be alternately submerged and laid dry by subterranean movements; in one place a shoal will be formed, whereby the waters will drift matter over spaces where they once threw down their burden, and new cavities will elsewhere be produced, both marine and lacustrine, which will intercept the waters bearing sediment, and thereby stop the supply once carried to some distant basin.

Without entering into more detailed explanations, the reader will perceive that, according to the laws now governing the aqueous and igneous causes, distinct deposits must, at different periods, be thrown down on various parts of the earth's surface, and that, in the course of ages, the same area may become, again and again, the receptacle of such dissimilar sets of strata. During intervening periods, the space may either remain unaltered, or suffer what is termed *denudation*; in which case a superior set of strata is removed by the power of running water, and subjacent beds are laid bare, as happens wherever a sea encroaches upon a line of coast. By such means it is obvious that the discordance in age of rocks in contact must often be greatly increased.

The frequent unconformability in the stratification of the inferior and overlying formation is another phenomenon in their arrangement, which may be considered as a natural consequence of those movements that accompany the gradual conversion of part of an ocean into land: for by such convulsions the older set of strata may become rent, shattered,

inclined, and contorted to any amount. If the movement cease entirely, before a new deposit is formed in the same tract, the superior strata may repose horizontally upon the dislocated series. But even if the subterranean convulsions continue with increasing violence, the more recent formations must remain comparatively undisturbed, because they cannot share in the derangement previously produced in the older beds; while the latter, on the contrary, cannot fail to participate in all the movements subsequently communicated to the newer.

Change of species every where in progress.—If, then, it be conceded that the combined action of the volcanic and aqueous forces would give rise to a succession of distinct formations, and that these would be sometimes unconformable, let us next inquire in what manner these groups might become characterized by different assemblages of fossil remains.

I endeavoured to show, in the last book, that the hypothesis of the gradual extinction of certain animals and plants, and the successive introduction of new species, was quite consistent with all that is known of the existing economy of the animate world; and if it is found to be the only hypothesis which is reconcileable with geological phenomena, we shall have strong grounds for conceiving that such is, and has been, the order of nature.

Fossilization of plants and animals partial.—We have seen that the causes which limit the duration of species are not confined, at any one time, to a particular part of the globe; and, for the same reason, if we suppose that their place is supplied, from time to time, by new species, we may suppose their introduction to be no less generally in progress. It would follow, therefore, from all the foregoing premises, that the change of species would be in simultaneous operation every where throughout the habitable surface of sea and land; whereas the fossilization of plants and animals must always be confined to those areas where new strata are produced. These areas, as has been proved, are always shifting their position; so that the fossilizing process, by means of which the commemoration of the particular state of the organic world, at any given time, is effected, may be said to move about, visiting and revisiting different tracts in succession.

In order more distinctly to elucidate my idea of the working of this machinery, I shall compare it to a somewhat analogous case that might easily be imagined to occur in the history of human affairs. Let the mortality of the population of a large country represent the successive extinction of species, and the births of new individuals the introduction of new species. While these fluctuations are gradually taking place every where, suppose commissioners to be appointed to visit each province of the country in succession, taking an exact account of the number, names, and individual peculiarities of all the inhabitants, and leaving in each district a register containing a record of this information. If, after the comple-

tion of one census, another is immediately made on the same plan, and then another, there will, at last, be a series of statistical documents in each province. When these are arranged in chronological order, the contents of those which stand next to each other will differ according to the length of the intervals of time between the taking of each census. If, for example, there are sixty provinces, and all the registers are made in a single year and renewed annually, the number of births and deaths will be so small, in proportion to the whole of the inhabitants, during the interval between the compiling of two consecutive documents, that the individuals described in such documents will be nearly identical; whereas, if the survey of each of the sixty provinces occupies all the commissioners for a whole year, so that they are unable to revisit the same until the expiration of sixty years, there will then be an almost entire discordance between the persons enumerated in two consecutive registers in the same province. There are undoubtedly other causes besides the mere quantity of time, which may augment or diminish the amount of discrepancy. Thus, at some periods, a pestilential disease may have lessened the average duration of human life, or a variety of circumstances may have caused the births to be unusually numerous, and the population to multiply; or, a province may be suddenly colonized by persons migrating from surrounding districts.

I must also remind the reader, that I do not propose the case as an exact parallel to those geological phenomena which I desire to illustrate; for the commissioners are supposed to visit the different provinces in rotation; whereas the commemorating processes by which organic remains become fossilized, although they are always shifting from one area to another, are yet very irregular in their movements. They may abandon and revisit many spaces again and again, before they once approach another district; and, besides this source of irregularity, it may often happen that, while the depositing process is suspended, denudation may take place, which may be compared to the occasional destruction by fire or other causes of some of the statistical documents before mentioned. It is evident that, where such accidents occur, the want of continuity in the series may become indefinitely great, and that the monuments which follow next in succession will by no means be equidistant from each other in point of time.

If this train of reasoning be admitted, the distinctness of the fossil remains, in formations immediately in contact, would be a necessary consequence of the existing laws of sedimentary deposition, and of a constant mortality and renovation of species.

I have already stated, that we should naturally look for a change in the mineral character in strata thrown down at distant intervals in the same place; and, in like manner, we must also expect, for the reason last set forth, to meet occasionally with sudden transitions from one set of

organic remains to another. But the causes which have given rise to such differences in mineral characters have no necessary connexion with those which have produced a change in the species of imbedded plants and animals.

When the lowest of two sets of strata are much dislocated throughout a wide area, the upper being undisturbed, there is usually a considerable discordance in the organic remains of the two groups; but the coincidence in this instance, of the point where the fossils and the stratification change their character, must not be ascribed to the agency of the disturbing forces, as if they had exterminated the living inhabitants of the surface. The *lapse of time* assumed to be requisite for the development of so great a series of subterranean movements has, in such cases, allowed the species also throughout the globe to vary, and hence the two phenomena are usually concomitant.

Although these inferences appear to me very obvious, I am aware that they are directly opposed to many popular theories respecting catastrophes; I shall, therefore, endeavour to illustrate these views still more clearly by another analogous case. Suppose we had discovered two buried cities at the foot of Vesuvius, immediately superimposed upon each other, with a great mass of tuff and lava intervening, just as Portici and Resina, if now covered with ashes, would overlie Herculaneum. An antiquary might possibly be entitled to infer, from the inscriptions on public edifices, that the inhabitants of the inferior and older town were Greeks, and those of the modern Italians. But he would reason very hastily if he also concluded, from these data, that there had been a sudden change from the Greek to the Italian language in Campania. Suppose he afterwards found *three* buried cities, one above the other, the intermediate one being Roman, while, as in the former example, the lowest was Greek and the uppermost Italian; he would then perceive the fallacy of his former opinion, and would begin to suspect that the catastrophes, by which the cities were inhumed, might have no relation whatever to the fluctuations in the language of the inhabitants; and that, as the Roman tongue had evidently intervened between the Greek and Italian, so many other dialects may have been spoken in succession, and the passage from the Greek to the Italian may have been very gradual; some terms growing obsolete, while others were introduced from time to time.

If this antiquary could have shown that the volcanic paroxysms of Vesuvius were so governed as that cities should be buried one above the other, just as often as any variation occurred in the language of the inhabitants, then, indeed, the abrupt passage from a Greek to a Roman, and from a Roman to an Italian city, would afford proof of fluctuations no less sudden in the language of the people.

So, in Geology, if we could assume that it is part of the plan of nature to preserve, in every region of the globe, an unbroken series of monu-

ments to commemorate the vicissitudes of the organic creation, we might infer the sudden extirpation of species, and the simultaneous introduction of others, as often as two formations in contact are found to include dissimilar organic fossils. But we must shut our eyes to the whole economy of the existing causes, aqueous, igneous, and organic, if we fail to perceive *that such is not the plan of Nature.*

CHAPTER V.

CLASSIFICATION OF TERTIARY FORMATIONS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

Comparative value of different classes of organic remains—Fossil remains of testacea the most important—Necessity of accurately determining species—Four subdivisions of the tertiary epoch proposed—Recent formations (p. 220.)—Newer Pliocene period—Older Pliocene period—Miocene period—Eocene period—The distinct zoological characters of these periods may not imply sudden changes in the animate creation—Numerical proportion of recent species of shells in different tertiary periods (p. 226.)—The recent strata form a common point of departure in distant regions—Mammiferous remains—Synoptical table of recent and tertiary formations.

In the second chapter I explained the principles on which the relative ages of different formations may be ascertained, and the distinctive character was found to be chiefly derivable from superposition, mineral structure, and organic remains. It is by combining the evidence deducible from all these sources, that we are enabled to determine the chronological succession of distinct formations.

It will be seen, that in proportion as investigations have been extended over a larger area, it has become necessary to intercalate new groups of an age intermediate between those first examined; and we have every reason to expect that, as the science advances, new links in the chain will be supplied, and that the passage from one period to another will become less abrupt. We may even hope, without travelling to distant regions,—without even transgressing the limits of western Europe, to render the series far more complete. The fossil shells, for example, of many of the Subalpine formations, on the northern limits of the plains of the Po, have not yet been carefully collected and compared with those of other countries, and we are almost entirely ignorant of many deposits known to exist in Spain and Portugal.

The views developed in the last chapter, respecting breaks in the sequence of geological monuments, will explain our reasons for anticipating the discovery of intermediate gradations as often as new regions of great extent are explored.

Comparative Value of different Classes of Organic Remains.

In the mean time, we must endeavour to make the most systematic arrangement in our power of those formations which are already known; and in attempting to classify these in chronological order, we must chiefly depend on the evidence afforded by their fossil organic contents. In the execution of this task we have first to consider what class of remains are most useful; for although every kind of fossil animal and plant is interesting, and cannot fail to throw light on the former history of the globe at a certain period, yet those classes of remains which are of rare and casual occurrence are absolutely of no use for the purposes of general classification. If we have plants alone in one assemblage of strata, and the bones of mammalia in another, we can draw no conclusion respecting the number of species of organic beings common to two epochs; or if we have plants and vertebrated animals in one series, and only shells in another, we can form no opinion respecting the remoteness or proximity of the two areas. We might, perhaps, draw some conclusions as to relative antiquity, if we could compare each of the two formations to a third; as, for example, if the species of shells should be almost all identical with those now living, while the plants and vertebrated animals were all extinct; for we might then infer that the shelly deposit was the most recent of the two. But in this case the information would flow from a direct comparison of the species of corresponding orders of the animal and vegetable kingdoms,—of plants with plants, and shells with shells; the only mode of making a systematic arrangement by reference to organic remains.

Although the bones of mammalia in the tertiary strata, and those of reptiles in the secondary, afford us instruction of the most interesting kind, yet the species are too few, and confined to too small a number of localities, to be of much value in characterizing the subdivisions of geological formations. The remains of fish will soon become of much more importance, although the science of fossil ichthyology is still so new that there has been scarcely as yet time for the application of its results to geology. The researches of Mr. Agassiz have recently enabled him to determine the existence in European collections of no less than 900 species, which are distributed largely through deposits of every age. A mere tooth, or a few scales, is often sufficient for the recognition of a species, and the range of species in this class seems, in general, to be

very limited in the vertical series ; in other words, the same species is rarely common to two or more distinct groups of superimposed strata.

Yet these same fish are said to have a very wide horizontal range ; that is to say, are found fossil in the same formations in countries extremely distant. Should farther investigation confirm these views of Mr. Agassiz, respecting the constancy of their characters and their limitation to particular formations, no class of fossils will contribute more powerfully than fossil fish to the identification of contemporaneous strata in distant parts of the earth.

We can scarcely hope to derive equal assistance from fossil botany, as it is only in a few formations, and in certain kinds of rock, that plants are numerous and well preserved. In these places, however, they throw great light on the former state of the globe at the periods to which they refer. Even in regard to zoophytes, which are so much more abundant in a fossil state than any of the classes above enumerated, we have hitherto been impeded in our endeavours to classify strata by their aid, in consequence of the smallness of the number of recent species which have been examined from those tropical seas where they occur in the greatest profusion. But these difficulties will soon be lessened, and Mr. Ehrenberg's recent investigation of the corals of the Red Sea has greatly advanced this department of science.*

Fossil remains of testacea of chief importance.—The testacea then are by far the most important class of organic beings which have left their spoils in the subaqueous deposits ; and they have been truly said to be the medals which nature has chiefly selected to record the history of the former changes of the globe. There is scarcely any great series of strata that does not contain some marine or fresh-water shells ; and these fossils are often found so entire, especially in the tertiary formations, that when disengaged from the matrix, they have all the appearance of having been just procured from the sea. Their colour, indeed, is usually wanting, but the parts whereon specific characters are founded remain unimpaired ; and though the animals themselves are gone, their form and habits can generally be inferred from the shell which covered them.

The utility of the testacea, in geological classification, is greatly enhanced by the circumstance that some forms are proper to the sea, others to the land, and others to fresh water. Rivers scarcely ever fail to carry down into their deltas some land shells, together with species which are at once fluvatile and lacustrine. The Rhone, for example, receives annually, from the Durance, many shells which are drifted in an entire state from the higher Alps of Dauphiny ; and these species such as *Bulimus montanus*, are carried down into the delta of the Rhone to a climate very different from that of their native habitation. The young

* See Book III. ch. xviii.

hermit crabs may often be seen on the shores of the Mediterranean, near the mouth of the Rhone, inhabiting these univalves, brought down to them from so great a distance.* At the same time that some fresh water and land shells are carried into the sea, other individuals of the same species become fossil in inland lakes, and by this means we learn what species of fresh water and marine testacea coexisted at particular eras. We also make out the connexion between various plants and mammifers imbedded in those lacustrine deposits, and the testacea which lived at the same time in the ocean.

There are two other characters of the molluscou animals which render them extremely valuable in settling chronological questions in Geology. The first of these is a wide geographical range, and the second (probably a consequence of the former) is the superior duration of species in this class. It is evident that if the habitation of a species be very local, it cannot aid us greatly in establishing the contemporaneous origin of distant groups of strata, in the manner pointed out in the last chapter; and if a wide geographical range be useful in collecting formations far separated in space, the longevity of species is no less serviceable in establishing the relations of strata considerably distant from each other in point of time.

I shall revert in the sequel to the curious fact, that in tracing back the series of tertiary deposits from the newer to the older, many existing species of testacea accompany us after the disappearance of all fossil remains of the recent mammalia and fish. We even find the skeletons of extinct quadrupeds in deposits wherein all the land and freshwater shells are of living species.†

Necessity of accurately determining species.—The reader will already perceive that the systematic arrangement of strata, so far as it rests on organic remains, must depend essentially on the accurate determination of *species*; and the geologist must therefore have recourse to the ablest naturalists, devoted to the study of certain departments of organic nature.

It is scarcely possible that they who are continually employed in laborious investigations in the field, and in ascertaining the relative position and characters of mineral masses, should have leisure to acquire a profound knowledge of fossil osteology, conchology, and other branches of zoological inquiry; but it is desirable that in these sciences they should become acquainted with the principles at least on which specific characters are determined, and the habits of species inferred from their peculiar forms.

When the specimens of shells are in an imperfect state of preservation, or happen to belong to genera in which it is difficult to decide on the

* M. Marcel de Serres pointed out this curious fact to me when I visited Montpellier, July, 1828.

† See Vol. I. p. 101, and Book iv. chap. xi.

species, except the inhabitant itself be present, or when any other grounds of ambiguity arise, we must reject, or lay small stress upon, the evidence, lest we vitiate our general results. We cannot do better than consider the steps by which the science of botanical geography has reached its present stage of advancement, and endeavour to introduce the same severe comparison of the specific characters, in drawing our geological inferences.

SUBDIVISIONS OF THE TERTIARY EPOCH.

I shall now proceed to consider the subdivisions of tertiary strata which may be founded on the results of a comparison of their respective fossils, and to give names to the periods to which they may be severally referred. But, first, it will be necessary to explain the difference between the *tertiary* phenomena and those described in the last two books. In the present work all those geological monuments are called tertiary which are newer than the secondary formations, and which on the other hand cannot be proved to have originated since the earth was inhabited by man.

Part of the changes, whether of the animate or inanimate world, considered in the preceding books, was ascertained by historical testimony to have taken place within the human epoch; as, for example, the accumulation of the newer portion of the deltas of the Po, Rhone and Nile. Another part, where history was silent, was proved to belong to the same epoch by the evidence of the fossil remains of man or his works. All formations, whether igneous or aqueous, which can be shown by any such proofs to be of a date posterior to the introduction of man, will be called *Recent*. Some authors have applied the term *contemporaneous* in the same sense; but as this word is so frequently in use to express the synchronous origin of distinct rocks of every age, it would be a source of great inconvenience and ambiguity if we were to confine it to a technical meaning.

The European tertiary strata may be referred to four successive periods, each characterized by containing a very different proportion of fossil shells of *recent* species. I have considered that it may be useful to distinguish these four periods by the following terms: Newer Pliocene, Older Pliocene, Miocene, and Eocene. But, before explaining their etymology, and the geological characters of the several groups which they designate, it will be proper to point out some of the steps by which I was led to adopt a four-fold division, and to acknowledge the co-operation of other geologists, who, about the same time, and from independent observations, had come to conclusions very similar to my own.

Before I visited Turin in 1828, in company with Mr. Murchison, I had already conceived the idea of classing the different tertiary groups by reference to the proportional number of recent species found fossil in each. Signor Bonelli then informed us, that the fossil shells of the hill

of the Superga differed as a group from those of Parma and other localities of the Subapennine beds of northern Italy; and, on the other hand, that the characteristic shells of the Superga agreed with the species found at Bordeaux and other parts of the South of France. We were the more struck with this remark, as we had already inferred that the highly-inclined strata of the valley of the Bormida, which agree with those of the Superga, were older than the more horizontal Subapennine marls, by which the plains of the Tanaro and the Po are skirted. At the same time, Signor Bonelli called my attention to suites of fossil shells in the museum of Turin, of species common to the Subapennine beds and to the Mediterranean; and pointed out that not only the ordinary type of the species, but even the different varieties, had their counterparts both in the fossil and recent series. I afterwards examined a beautiful collection of the tertiary shells of Italy at Parma, in the cabinets of Professor Guidotti, who computed, on a loose estimate, that there were about thirty per cent. of living species in the Subapennine beds bordering the plains of the Po. I then continued my inquiries on the same subject at Florence, Sienna, and Rome; and on my arrival at Naples, became acquainted with Signor O. G. Costa, who had examined the fossil shells of Otranto and Calabria, and had collected many recent testacea from the seas surrounding the Calabrian coasts. His comparison of the fossil and living species had led him to a very different result respecting the southern extremity of Italy, from that to which Signors Bonelli and Guidotti had arrived in regard to the north, for he was of opinion that few of the tertiary shells were of extinct species. In confirmation of this view, he showed me a collection of fossil shells from the territory of Otranto, in which nearly all the species were recent.

After visiting the Island of Ischia, the neighbourhood of Naples, and afterwards a great part of Sicily, I was satisfied that in all these countries the tertiary strata contained so many shells of living species that the extinct species formed rather the exception to the general rule, whereas in the tertiary strata near Turin it was decidedly more difficult to find a recent than an extinct fossil species.

On my return to Turin, towards the close of the same year (1828), I communicated the results of my observations to Signor Bonelli, who undertook to draw up for me a comparative table of the characteristic shells common to the tertiary green-sand of the Superga, and to the strata of the south of France around Bordeaux and Dax; intending me to publish the table in my work. But the death of this amiable and zealous naturalist soon deprived me of his assistance. I had then (December, 1828) fully decided on attempting to establish four subdivisions of the tertiary epoch, considering the basin of Paris and London to be the type of the first; the beds of the Superga of the second; the Subapennine strata of northern Italy of the third; and southern Italy and the Val di Noto, in Sicily,

of the fourth. I was also convinced that I had seen proofs during my tour in Auvergne, Tuscany, and Sicily, of volcanic rocks contemporary with the sedimentary strata of three, if not of all, the above periods.

On my return to Paris, in February, 1829, I communicated to M. Desnoyers some of the new views to which my examination of Sicily had led me, and my intention to attempt a classification of the different tertiary formations in chronological order, by reference to the comparative proportion of living species of shells found fossil in each. He informed me that, during my tour, he had been employed in printing the first part of his memoir, not yet published, on "the Tertiary Formations more recent than the Paris Basin," in which he had insisted on the doctrine of "the succession of tertiary formations of different ages." At the end of the first part of his memoir, which was published before I left Paris, he annexed a note on the accordance of many of my views with his own, and he announced my intention of arranging the tertiary formations chronologically, according to the relative number of fossils in each group which were identifiable with species now living.*

At the same time I learned from M. Desnoyers, that M. Deshayes had previously, by the mere inspection of fossil shells in his extensive museum, convinced himself that the different tertiary formations might be arranged in a chronological series. I accordingly lost no time in seeing M. Deshayes, who explained to me the data on which he considered that three tertiary periods might be established, the two first of which corresponded to two of those which I was prepared to adopt (the Eocene and the Miocene), and the last embracing the Subapennine beds as distinguished from those of Bordeaux and the Superga. He had not then separated the Subapennine beds from those of Sicily, to which I have given the name of "Newer Pliocene."

On my return to Paris in September, 1830, I examined the collection of fossil and recent shells in the museum of M. Deshayes, and profited by his instructions in conchology. I then requested him to furnish me with lists of those species of shells which were common to two or more tertiary periods, as also the names of those known to occur both in some tertiary strata and in a living state. It was agreed that this information should be communicated in a tabular form; and after we had laboured together, and made several modifications of the plan first proposed, the tables were executed by M. Deshayes, so as to appear in his name in the third volume of my first edition, published in the beginning of the year 1833. These valuable tables contained the results of the examination of no less than 8000 tertiary and recent shells, and on such data the classification adopted in this work has been principally founded. It has not been thought desirable to reprint these tables, which have already had an extensive circulation among geologists; for I was unwilling again to

* See *Ann. des Sci. Nat.*, xvi. p. 214.

allot so much space to details which belong more strictly to the province of fossil conchology.

When I published my third volume I had not studied the second volume of Professor Bronn's "Journey in Italy," published at Heidelberg in December, 1831, in which he had remarked that the distinctive character of the older as compared to the newer tertiary formations of Italy, consisted in the much smaller proportion of living species of shells found fossil in the older beds.* He had also stated, in the same volume (p. 674), that the shells of the Superga beds have a nearer connexion with those of Bordeaux than with any other tertiary formation.

To resume the classification of the tertiary strata:—they may be divided into four groups, in the older of which we find an extremely small number of fossils identifiable with species now living;† whereas, on approaching the superior and newer sets, we find the remains of recent testacea in abundance. In no instance where we have an opportunity of observing two distinct formations in contact, the one superimposed upon the other, do we meet with an assemblage of organic remains in the uppermost differing more widely from the existing creation than the fossils of the inferior group. If there is occasionally an apparent exception to the rule, it is only where the remains belong to distinct classes of the animal kingdom; as, for example, where a deposit containing the bones of quadrupeds for the most part extinct overlies a stratum in which the imbedded shells are mostly of recent species—such exceptions seem to point to a difference in the comparative duration of species in different classes, but do not invalidate the general proposition before laid down.

Newer Pliocene period.—The latest of the four periods before alluded to is that which immediately preceded the Recent era. To this more modern period may be referred a portion of the strata of Sicily, the district round Naples, and several others to be considered in the sequel. They are characterized by a great preponderance of fossil shells referable to species still living, and may be called the Newer Pliocene strata, the term Pliocene, or "more recent," being derived from *πλειον*, major, and *καινος*, recens, as a large, often by far the largest, part of the fossil shells are of recent species.‡

Out of 226 fossil species brought from the Sicilian beds above alluded to, M. Deshayes found that no less than 216 were of species still living, and for the most part in the Mediterranean, whereas ten only were of

* Bronn's *Reisen*, &c., ii. p. 678.

† See post, p. 234.

‡ In this and the other names which I have adopted, it will be seen that the nomenclature has always reference to the relative proportion of recent species in the fossils of each period. In the terms Pliocene, Miocene, and Eocene, the Greek diphthong *ei* and *ai* are changed into the vowels *i* and *e*, in conformity with the idiom of our language. My friend, the Rev. W. Whewell, to whom I have been much indebted for assisting me in inventing and anglicizing these terms, reminds me that we have *Encenia*, an inaugural ceremony, derived from *ev* and *καινος*, recens; and as examples of the conversion of *ei* into *i*, we have icosahedron.

extinct or unknown species. I do not imagine that any of the groups referred to this period in the present work contain much more than the proportion of one in ten of extinct species of shells. Nevertheless, the antiquity of some Newer Pliocene strata of Sicily, as contrasted with our most remote historical eras, must be very great, embracing perhaps myriads of years.* There are no data for supposing that there is any break, or strong line of demarcation, between the strata and fossils of this and the Recent epoch; but, on the contrary, the monuments of the one seem to pass insensibly into those of the other.

Older Pliocene period.—The formations termed Subapennine in the north of Italy, and in Tuscany, contain among their fossil shells a large number which have been identified with living species. The proportion of *recent* shells usually approaches to one half. Out of 569 species examined from these strata in Italy, 238 were found to be still living, and 331 extinct or unknown. Out of 111 from the English crag, M. Deshayes determined forty-five to be recent species, and sixty-six to be extinct or unknown. The relative position of the Older Pliocene beds is explained in Fig. 84, p. 206, where they are designated by the letter *f*.

The plurality of species indicated by the name Pliocene must not in this instance be understood to imply an absolute majority of *recent* fossil shells in all cases, but a comparative preponderance whenever the Pliocene are contrasted with strata of the period immediately preceding.

Miocene period.—This antecedent tertiary epoch I shall name Miocene, or “less recent,” from *μειον*, minor and *καινος*, recens, a small minority only of fossil shells imbedded in its formations being referable to living species. After examining 1021 Miocene shells, M. Deshayes found that 176 only were recent, being in proportion of rather more than seventeen in one hundred. As there are a certain number of fossil species which are exclusively confined to the Pliocene period, so also there are many shells equally characteristic of the Miocene. The species which pass from the Miocene into the Pliocene period, or which are common to both, are in number 196, of which 114 are living, and eighty-two extinct. The Miocene strata are largely developed in Touraine, and in the south of France near Bordeaux, in Piedmont, in the basin of Vienna, and other localities, and their relative position has been shown in Figs. 83 and 84, where they are designated by the letter *e*.

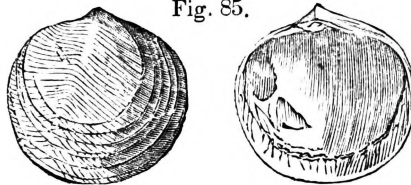
Eocene period.—The period next antecedent may be called Eocene, from *ηως*, aurora, and *καινος*, recens, because the very small proportion of living species contained in these strata indicates what may be considered the first commencement, or *dawn*, of the existing state of the animate creation. To this era the formations first called tertiary, of the Paris and London basins, are referable. Their position is shown in Figs. 83 and 84, letter *d*, in the third chapter.

* See chapters vi. vii. viii. ix.

The total number of fossil shells of this period already known, when the tables of M. Deshayes, before alluded to, were constructed, was 1238, of which number forty-two only are living species, being in the proportion of nearly three and a-half in one hundred. Of fossil species, not known as recent, forty-two were found to be common to the Eocene and Miocene epochs.

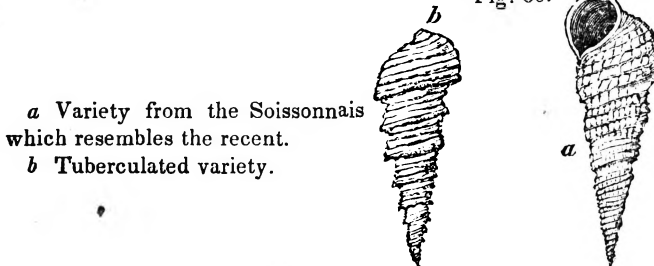
The present geographical distribution of those recent species which are found fossil in formations of such high antiquity as those of the Paris and London basins, is a subject of the highest interest. In the more modern formations, where so large a proportion of the fossil shells belong to species still living, they also belong, for the most part, to species now inhabiting the seas immediately adjoining the countries where they occur fossil; whereas the recent species, found in the older tertiary strata, are frequently inhabitants of distant latitudes, and usually of warmer climates. Of the forty-two Eocene species, or those found in the earliest tertiary strata, which occur fossil in England, France, and Belgium, and are at the same time still living, about half now inhabit the seas within or near the tropics, and almost all the rest are inhabitants of the more southern and warmer parts of Europe. If some Eocene species still flourish in the same latitudes where they are found fossil, they are species which, like *Lucina divaricata*, are now found in many seas, even those of very distant quarters of the globe; and this wide geographical range indicates a

Fig. 85.

*Lucina divaricata*, recent.

capacity of enduring a variety of external circumstances, which may enable a species to survive considerable changes of climate and other revolutions of the earth's surface. One fluviatile species (*Melania inquinata*),

Fig. 86.



a Variety from the Soissonnais
which resembles the recent.

b Tuberculated variety.

Melania inquinata as found fossil in Paris basin.
One third less than natural size.

fossil in the Paris basin, is now known only in the Philippine Islands; and, during the lowering of the temperature of certain parts of the earth's surface, may perhaps have escaped destruction by migrating to the south. I have pointed out in the third book how rapidly the eggs of freshwater species might, by the instrumentality of water-fowl, be transported from one region to another.* Other Eocene species, which still survive and range from the temperate zone to the equator, may formerly have extended from the pole to the temperate zone; and what was once the southern limit of their range may now be the most northern.

Even if geologists had not established several remarkable facts in attestation of the longevity of certain tertiary species, we might still have anticipated that the duration of the living species of aquatic and terrestrial testacea would be very unequal. For it is clear that those which have, a wide range, and inhabit many different regions and climates, may survive the influence of destroying causes, which might extirpate the greater part of species at present their contemporaries. The increase of existing species, and gradual disappearance of the extinct, as we trace the series of formations from the older to the newer, is somewhat analogous, as was before observed, to the fluctuations of a population such as might be recorded at successive periods, from the time when the oldest of the individuals now living was born to the present moment; and those Eocene testacea which still flourish may be said to have outlived several successive states of the organic world, just as Nestor survived three generations of men.

It appears, then, that the numerical proportion of recent to extinct species of fossil shells in the different tertiary periods may be thus expressed. In the

Newer Pliocene period about 90 to 95	} per cent. of <i>recent</i> fossils.†
Older Pliocene period . . . 35 to 50	
Miocene period 17	
Eocene period 3½	

These numbers, however, must be regarded merely as the results obtained from a careful examination of the first groups which chance has thrown in our way, or which lie in the most accessible parts of Europe.

The distribution of the fossil species from which the above results were obtained by M. Deshayes was as follows:—

In the formations of the Pliocene periods, older and newer . . .	777
In the Miocene	1021
In the Eocene	1238
	3036

* See ante, p. 42.

† The new terms may be remembered by Pliocene recalling *Plus, more*; Miocene, *Minus, less*; and Eocene, the *East*, or dawn.

Only seventeen species of shells were found to be common to the three epochs, which may therefore be said to characterize the entire tertiary formations of Europe. Thirteen of them are species still living, while four are known only as fossil. The thirteen living species are—

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Dentalium entalis</i> . | 8. <i>Polymorphina gibba</i> . |
| 2. ———— <i>strangulatum</i> . | 9. <i>Triloculina oblonga</i> . |
| 3. <i>Fissurella græca</i> . | 10. <i>Lucina divaricata</i> . |
| 4. <i>Bulla lignaria</i> . | 11. ———— <i>gibbosula</i> . |
| 5. <i>Rissoa cochlearella</i> . | 12. <i>Isocardia cor</i> . |
| 6. <i>Murex fistulosus</i> . | 13. <i>Nucula margaritacea</i> . |
| 7. ———— <i>tubifer</i> . | |

The four extinct species are—

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Dentalium coarctatum</i> . | 3. <i>Bulimus terebellatus</i> . |
| 2. <i>Tornatella inflata</i> . | 4. <i>Corbula complanata</i> . |

In thus selecting the proportional number of recent to extinct species of shells as a useful term of comparison for successive tertiary groups, or as one from which a convenient nomenclature may be derived, I have no wish to exalt the mere per-centage of living species of fossil shells into the leading characteristic of each group. The Eocene strata of Paris and London, for example, are marked by the presence of a vast variety of peculiar *extinct* species of testacea, as well as of other animal and vegetable remains, in comparison of which the proportion of living species is a character of subordinate importance. At the same time it should be observed, that had the geologist collected the fossils of the crag of Norfolk, the blue clay of London, and the coarse white limestone of Paris, and then consider these formations merely with reference to the number of recent shells contained in each, he would have seen, by this character alone, that the Parisian and London strata differed widely from the crag, and agreed very closely with each other. Afterwards, on extending his examination to the *extinct* species, he would find that those of the Paris and London formations also corresponded, and formed together an assemblage very distinct from the *extinct* species in the crag. In this and many other cases where our zoological investigations are far advanced, a reference to the proportion of recent species would lead to the same general classifications, as the mere consideration of extinct testacea in different tertiary formations.

Many geologists are desirous of connecting divisions such as those above pointed out with sudden and violent interruptions to the ordinary course of events, and they regard them as indicative of successive changes in the organic world, accompanying revolutions equally important in the physical geography of the earth's surface. But I have already attempted to show, that such apparent breaks in the geological series may be accounted for partly by the mode in which the commemorative processes

operate, partly by the removal of strata by denudation, and that they arise, in part, from the small progress which we have hitherto made in the discovery and study of such deposits as are preserved.*

From the experience of the last few years, we may anticipate the discovery of many intermediate gradations between the boundary lines first drawn; and if formations are brought to light intervening between the Eocene and Miocene, or between those of the last period and the Pliocene, we may still find an appropriate place for all, by forming subdivisions, on the same principle as that which has determined the separation of the lower from the upper Pliocene groups. Thus, for example, we might have three divisions of the Eocene epoch,—the older, middle, and newer; and three similar subdivisions, both of the Miocene and Pliocene epochs. In that case, the formations of the middle period must be considered as the types from which the assemblage of organic remains in the groups on both sides will diverge.

When we institute a new genus in natural history, and intend it to occupy a place intermediate between two genera previously established, as the genus *B*, for example, between *A* and *C*, we select a particular species *b*, as the generic type of *B*, and then determine to refer all other species to the same genus, provided they approach nearer to *b* than the types of *A* or *C*. On comparing together the species of *B*, we discover that they deviate in various ways and degrees from the typical species, some of them approaching somewhat nearer to the characters of the genus *A* which precedes, others to *C* which stands next, in the series. By due attention to these shades of difference we may arrange all the congeners in order, according to their natural affinities.

In like manner, when we desire to class geological formations in a chronological series, we may select a certain set of strata as *b*, and consider it as typical of a particular period *B*. We may then refer other formations to *B*, if they resemble in their organic contents the normal group *b* more nearly than the types of the antecedent or subsequent epochs *A* and *C*. And we may consider the strata which in departing slightly from *b* approximate to *A* as being the older divisions of the period *B*, and those which depart from the type *b* in the direction of *C* as the newer deposits of the same era.

In determining originally the order of succession of *A*, *B*, and *C*, we must be guided, as far as possible, by the evidence of superposition by which the relative age of the principal groups may generally be decided with certainty.

It must not be inferred from any thing above advanced, that the fourfold division of the tertiary epoch is purely arbitrary, or that any other number of periods might in the present state of the science have been chosen with

* See ante, p. 210.

equal propriety. For, though it be true that zoological periods in geology, like genera and orders in Natural History, are purely artificial divisions, yet we have at present no alternative but to accept those lines of separation which we find in the series of monuments first brought to light.

It is a comparatively easy task to establish genera in departments of zoology and botany which have been enriched with only a small number of species, and where there is as yet no tendency in one set of characters to pass almost insensibly, by a multitude of collecting links, into another. So, in geology, our faculties of systematic arrangement are perhaps greater now than they will be hereafter, when we shall be under the necessity of intercalating new periods between those first established.

In conclusion, I may observe, that although the lapse of ages comprised within a single period is very much narrowed by the fourfold subdivision above explained, yet when all the Eocene or Miocene deposits are said to be *contemporaneous*, this term must be received with a good deal of latitude. Considerable intervals of time may have elapsed without giving rise to any marked distinction in the imbedded organic remains.

Suppose the growth of the delta of the Nile to cease from this moment, and some new river to begin to transport sediment into the Mediterranean at any other point, and to form a delta in the course of many thousand years, this last formation might contain the same fossils as the marine and fluviatile deposits of the Nile previously accumulated in Lower Egypt; the difference at least might be so trifling that future geologists would regard them as contemporaneous, if they followed the same rules of classification as those laid down in this chapter.

The recent strata form a common point of departure in all countries.—We derive one great advantage from beginning our classification of formations by a comparison of the fossils of the more recent strata with the species now living; namely, the acquisition of a common point of departure in every region of the globe. Thus, for example, if strata should be discovered in India or South America, containing the same small proportion of recent shells as are found in the Paris basin, *they* also might be termed Eocene; and, on analogous data, an approximation might be made to the relative dates of strata placed in the arctic and tropical regions, or the comparative age might be ascertained of European deposits and those at the antipodes. There might be no species common to the two groups; yet we might make some approach, perhaps a near one, towards determining their relative age from the common relation which they bear to the existing state of the animate creation. We may afterwards avail ourselves of the dates thus established, as eras to which the monuments of preceding periods may be referred.

Mammiferous remains of successive tertiary eras.—But although a thirtieth part of the Eocene testacea have been identified with species now living, none of the associated mammiferous remains belong to species

which now exist, either in Europe or elsewhere. Some of these equalled the horse, and others the rhinoceros in size ; and they could not possibly have escaped observation, had they survived down to our time. More than forty of these Eocene mammals are referable to a particular division of the order Pachydermata, which has now only four living representatives on the globe, namely, three tapirs, and the Daman of the Cape. Of those forty fossil species, even the genera are distinct from any which have been established for the classification of living animals.

In the Miocene mammalia we find a few of the generic forms most frequent in the Eocene strata associated with some of those now existing, and in the Pliocene we find an intermixture of extinct and recent species of quadrupeds. There is, therefore, a considerable degree of accordance between the results deducible from an examination of the fossil testacea, and those derived from the mammiferous fossils. But although the latter are more important in respect of the unequivocal evidence afforded by them of the extinction of species, yet for reasons before explained, they are of comparatively small value in the general classification of strata in geology.*

We have seen the imbedding of mammiferous remains depends on rare casualties, and that they are, for the most part, preserved in detached alluvium covering the emerged land, or in osseous breccias and stalagmites formed in caverns and fissures, or in isolated lacustrine formations.† Such fissures and caves may probably have remained open during successive geological periods ; and the alluvions, spread over the surface, may have been disturbed again and again, until the mammalia of successive epochs were mingled and confounded together. Hence we must be careful, when we endeavour to refer the remains of mammalia to certain tertiary periods, that we ascertain, not only their association with testacea of which the date is known, but, also, that the remains were intermixed in such a manner as to leave no doubt of the former co-existence of the species.

In the next page will be found a Synoptical Table of the Recent and Tertiary Formations alluded to in this and the following chapters.

* See ante, p. 217.

† Book III. chaps. xiii and xiv.

Synoptical Table of Recent and Tertiary Formations.

PERIODS.	Character of Formations.	Examples of localities of the Formations.
I. RECENT.	Marine.	{ Coral formations of Pacific. Delta of Po, Ganges, Mississippi.
	Freshwater.	{ Modern deposits in Lake Superior—Lake of Geneva—Marl lakes of Scotland—Italian travertin.
	Volcanic.	{ Jorullo—Monte Nuovo—Modern lavas of Iceland, Etna, Vesuvius.
II. TERTIARY.	1. Newer Pliocene.	Marine. Strata of the Val di Noto in Sicily, Ischia.
		Freshwater. Valley of the Elsa around Colle in Tuscany.
		Volcanic. { Older parts of Vesuvius, Etna, and Ischia—Volcanic rocks of the Val di Noto in Sicily.
	2. Older Pliocene.	Marine. { Northern Subapennine formations, as at Parma, Asti, Sienna, Perpignan, Nice—English Crag.
		Freshwater. { Alternating with marine beds near the town of Sienna.
		Volcanic. Volcanos of Tuscany and Campagna di Roma.
	3. Miocene.	Marine. { Strata of Touraine, Bordeaux, Valley of the Bormida, and the Superga near Turin—Basin of Vienna.
		Freshwater. { Alternating with marine at Saucats, twelve miles south of Bordeaux.
		Volcanic. { Hungarian and Transylvanian volcanic rocks. Part of the volcanos of Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay.
	4. Eocene.	Marine. Paris and London Basins.
		Freshwater. { Alternating with marine in Paris basin—Isle of Wight—purely lacustrine in Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay.
		Volcanic. Oldest part of volcanic rocks of Auvergne.

CHAPTER VI.

NEWER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS—SICILY.

Reasons for considering, in the first place, the more modern periods—Geological structure of Sicily—Formations of the Val di Noto—Divisible into three groups—Great limestone—Schistose and arenaceous limestone—Blue marl with shells—Strata subjacent to the above—Volcanic rocks of the Val di Noto (p. 236.)—Dikes—Tuffs and Peperinos—Volcanic conglomerates—Proofs of long intervals between volcanic eruptions—Dip and Direction of Newer Pliocene strata of Sicily.

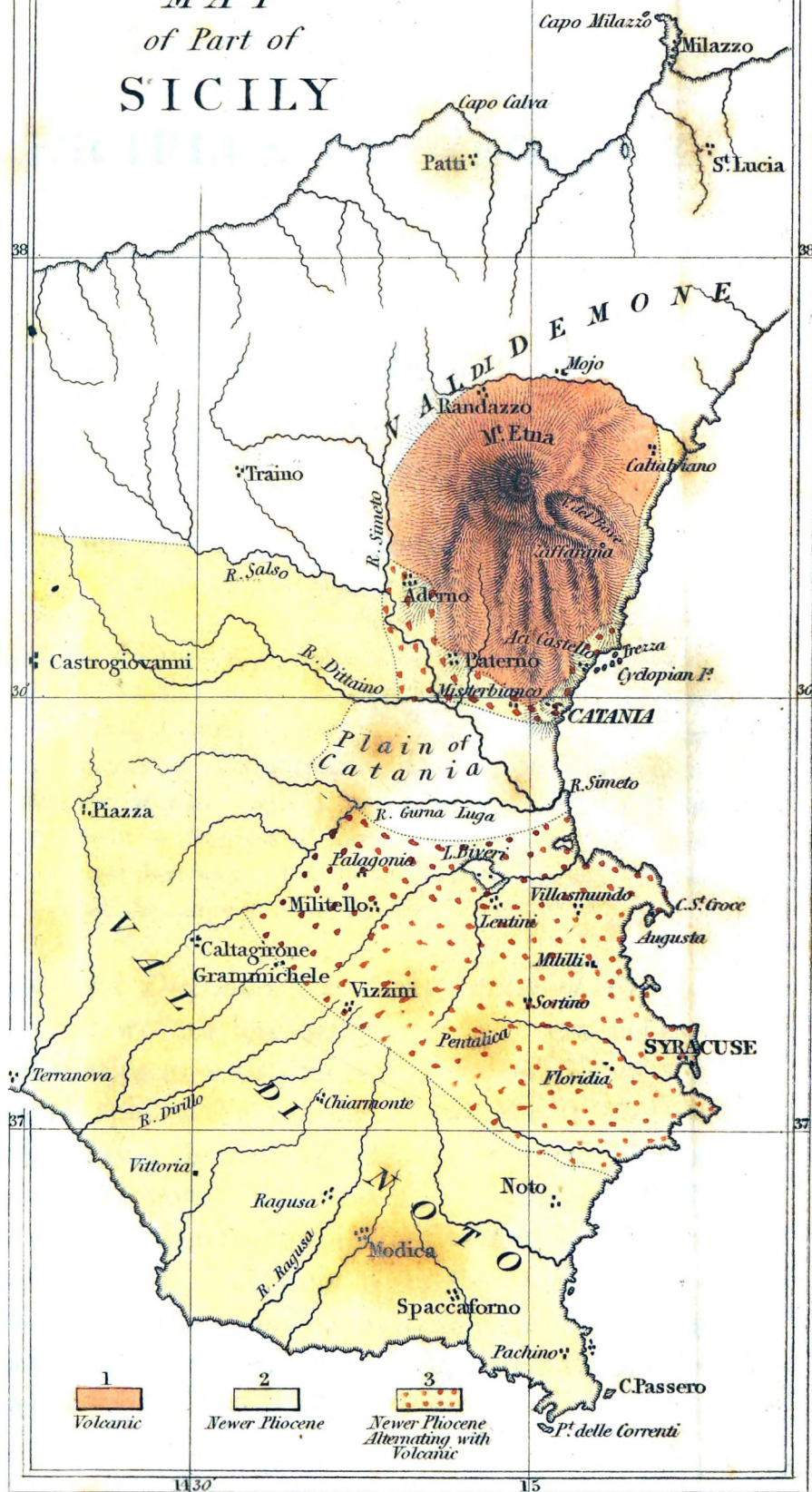
HAVING endeavoured, in the last chapter, to explain the principles on which the different tertiary formations may be arranged in chronological order, I shall now proceed to consider in detail the newest division, or that which, from its containing the greatest proportion of recent shells of any of the four tertiary groups, has been named the Newer Pliocene.*

It may appear that I reverse the natural order of historical research by thus describing, in the first place, the monuments of a period which immediately preceded our own era, and then passing to the events of antecedent ages. But, in the present state of geological science, this retrospective order of inquiry is the only one which can conduct us gradually from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the more complex phenomena. I have already explained my reasons for commencing with an examination, in the last two books, of the events of the *recent* epoch, from which the greater number of rules of interpretation in geology may be derived. The formations of the Newer Pliocene period will be considered next in order, because these have undergone the least degree of alteration, both in position and internal structure, subsequently to their origin. They are monuments of which the characters are more easily deciphered than those belonging to more remote periods, for they have been less mutilated by the hand of time. The organic remains, more especially of this era, are most important, not only as being in a more perfect state of preservation, but also as being chiefly referable to species now living, so that their habits are known to us by direct comparison, and not merely by inference from analogy, as in the case of extinct species.

Geological structure of Sicily.—I shall first describe an extensive district in Sicily, where the Newer Pliocene strata are largely developed, and where they are raised to considerable heights above the level of the sea. After presenting the reader with a view of these formations, I shall endeavour to explain the manner in which they originated, and shall

* See ante, pp. 223 and 226.

MAP of Part of SICILY



speculate on the subterranean changes of which their present position affords evidence.

The island of Sicily consists partly of primary and secondary rocks, which occupy, perhaps, about two-thirds of its superficial area; and the remaining part is covered by tertiary formations, which are of great extent in the southern and central parts of the island, while portions are found bordering nearly the whole of the coasts.

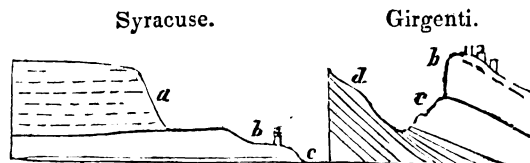
Formations of the Val di Noto.—If we first turn our attention to the Val di Noto (see Map, Pl. VII.), a district which intervenes between Etna and the southern promontory of Sicily, we find a considerable tract, containing within it hills which are from one to two thousand feet in height, entirely composed of limestone, marl, sandstone, and associated volcanic rocks, which belong to the Newer Pliocene era. The recent shells of the Mediterranean abound throughout the sedimentary strata, and there are abundant proofs that the igneous rocks were the produce of successive submarine eruptions, repeated at intervals during the time when the subaqueous formations were in progress.

These rising grounds of the Val di Noto are separated from the cone of Etna, and the marine strata whereon it rests, by the low level plain of Catania, just elevated above the level of the sea, and watered by the Simeto. The traveller who passes from Catania to Syracuse has an opportunity of observing, on the sides of the valley, many deep sections of the modern formations above described, especially if he makes a slight detour by Sortina and the valley of Pentalica.

The whole series of strata, in the Val di Noto, is divisible into three principal groups, exclusive of the associated volcanic rocks. The uppermost mass consists of limestone, which sometimes acquires the enormous thickness of seven or eight hundred feet, below which is a series much inferior in thickness, consisting of a calcareous sandstone, conglomerate and schistose limestone, and beneath this again blue marl. The whole of the above groups contain shells and zoophytes, nearly all of which are referable to species now inhabiting the contiguous sea.

Great limestone formation (a, Fig. 87).—In mineral character this rock often corresponds to the yellowish white building-stone of Paris,

Fig. 87.

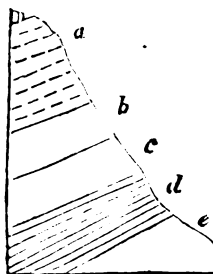


well known by the name of *Calcaire grossier*, but it often passes into a much more compact stone. In the deep ravine-like valleys of Sortino and Pentalica, it is seen in nearly horizontal strata, as solid and as regu-

larly bedded as the greater part of our ancient secondary formations. It abounds in natural caverns, which, in many places, as in the valley of Pentalica, have been enlarged by artificial excavations.

Fig. 88.

Castrogiovanni.



- a. Great limestone of Val di Noto.
- b. Schistose and arenaceous limestone of Florida.
- c. Blue marl with shells.
- d. White laminated marl.
- e. Blue clay and gypsum, without shells.

The shells in the limestone are very often indistinct, sometimes nothing but casts remaining ; but in many localities, especially where there is a slight intermixture of volcanic sand, they are more entire, and, as I have already stated, can almost all be identified with recent Mediterranean testacea. Several species of the genus *Pecten* are exceedingly numerous, particularly the large scallop (*P. Jacobæus*), now so common on the coasts of Sicily. The shells which I collected from this limestone at Syracuse, Villasmonde, Militello (V. di Noto), and Girgenti, have been examined by M. Deshayes, and found, with three or four exceptions, to be all referable to species now living.

The mineral characters of this great calcareous formation vary considerably in different parts of the island. In the south, near the town of Noto, the rock puts on the compactness, together with the spheroidal concretionary structure, of some of the Italian travertins. At the same place, also, it contains the leaves of plants and reeds, as if a stream of fresh water, charged with carbonate of lime and terrestrial vegetable remains, had entered the sea in the neighbourhood. At Spaccaforno, and other places in the south of Sicily, a similar compact variety of the limestone occurs, where it is for the most part pure white, often very thick bedded, and occasionally without any lines of stratification. This hard white rock is often four or five hundred feet in thickness, and appears to contain no fossil shells. It has much the appearance of having been precipitated from the waters of mineral springs, such as frequently rise up at the bottom of the sea in the volcanic regions of the Mediterranean. As these springs give out an equal quantity of mineral matter at all seasons, they are much more likely to give rise to unstratified masses, than a river which is swollen and charged with sedimentary matter of different kinds, and in unequal quantities, at particular seasons of the year.

The great limestone, above mentioned, prevails not only in the Val di Noto, but reappears in the centre of the island, capping the hill of Castrogiovanni, at the height of three thousand feet above the level of the

sea. It is cavernous there, as at Sortino and Syracuse, and contains fossil shells and casts of shells of the same species.*

Schistose and arenaceous limestone, &c. (b. Fig. 87.).—The limestone above mentioned passes downwards into a white calcareous sand, which has sometimes a tendency to an oolitic and pisolitic structure, analogous to that before described, when speaking of the travertin of Tivoli.† At Floridia, near Syracuse, it contains a sufficient number of small calcareous pebbles to constitute a conglomerate, where also beds of sandy limestone are associated, replete with numerous fragments of shells, and much resembling, in structure, the English corn-brash. A diagonal lamination is often observable in the calcareous sandy beds analogous to that represented in the first volume (p. 236, Fig. 13.), and to that exhibited in many sections of the English crag.‡

In some parts of Sicily, this sandy calcareous division, *b*, seems to be represented by yellow sand, exactly resembling that so frequently superimposed on the blue shelly marl of the Subapennines in the Italian peninsula. Thus, near Grammichele, on the road to Caltagirone, beds of incoherent yellow sand, several hundred feet in thickness, with occasional layers of shells, repose upon the blue shelly marl of Caltagirone.

When we consider the arenaceous character of this formation, the disposition of the laminae, and the broken shells sometimes imbedded in it, it is difficult not to suspect that it was formed in shallower water, and nearer the action of the superficial currents, than the superincumbent limestone, which was evidently accumulated in a sea of considerable depth. If we adopt this view, we must suppose a subsidence of the bed of the sea, subsequent to the deposition of the arenaceous beds in the Val di Noto.

Blue marl with shells (c, Figs. 87, 88.).—Under the sandy beds, last mentioned, is found an argillaceous deposit of variable thickness, called *Creta* in Sicily. It resembles the blue marl of the Subapennine hills, and, like it, incloses fossil shells and corals in a beautiful state of preservation. Of these I collected a great abundance from the clay, on the south side of the harbour of Syracuse, and twenty species in the environs of Caltanissetta, all of which, with three exceptions, M. Deshayes was able to identify with recent species. From similar blue marl, alternating with yellow sand, at Caltagirone, at an elevation of about 500 feet above the level of the sea, I obtained forty species of shells, of which all but six were recognised as identical with recent species.§ The position of this argillaceous formation is well seen at Castrogiovanni and Girgenti, as

* Dr. Daubeny correctly identified the Val di Noto limestone of Syracuse with that of the summit of Castrogiovanni. Jameson, Ed. Phil. Journ., No. xxv., p. 107. July, 1825.

† Vol. I. p. 204.

‡ See chap. xiii.

§ Lists of these shells were given in Appendix II. of the first, or octavo edition.

represented in the sections, Figs. 87, 88. In both of these places the limestone of the Val di Noto reappears, passing downwards into a calcareous sandstone, below which is a shelly blue clay.

Strata beneath the blue marl.—The clay rests, in both localities, on an older series of white and blue marls, probably belonging to the tertiary period, but of which I was unable to determine the age, having procured from it no organic remains save the skeletons of fish, all of extinct species, which I found in the white thinly laminated marls.*

These marls are sometimes gypseous, and belong to a great argillaceous formation which stretches over a considerable part of Sicily, and contains sulphur and salt in great abundance. The strata of this group have been in some places contorted in the most extraordinary manner, their convolutions often resembling those seen in the most disturbed districts of primary clay slate.

But I wish, at present, to direct the reader's exclusive attention to strata decidedly referable to the Newer Pliocene era, and I have yet to mention the igneous rocks associated with the sedimentary formations already alluded to.

Volcanic rocks of the Val di Noto.—The volcanic rocks occasionally associated with the limestones, sands, and marls already described, constitute a very prominent feature throughout the Val di Noto. Great confusion might have been expected to prevail, where lava and ejected sand and scorix are intermixed with the marine strata, and, accordingly, we find it often impossible to recognise the exact part of the series to which the beds thus interfered with belong.

Sometimes there are proofs of the posterior origin of the lava, and sometimes of the newer date of the stratified rock, for we find dikes of lava intersecting both the marl and limestone, while, in other places, calcareous beds repose upon lava, and are unaltered at the point of contact. Thus the shelly limestone of Capo Santa Croce rests in horizontal strata upon a mass of lava, which had evidently been long exposed to the action of the waves, so that the surface has been worn perfectly smooth. The limestone is unchanged at its junction with the igneous rock, and incloses within it pebbles of the lava.†

The volcanic formations of the Val di Noto usually consist of the most ordinary variety of basalt, with or without olivine. The rock is sometimes compact, often very vesicular. The vesicles are occasionally empty, both in dikes and currents, and are in some localities filled with

* I found these fossil fish in great abundance on the road, half a mile northwest of Radusa, on my way to Castrogiovanni, where the marls are fetid; and near Castrogiovanni in gypseous marls, at the mile-stone No. 88, and between that and No. 89.

† This locality is described by Professor Hoffmann, *Archiv. für Mineralogie, &c.* Berlin, 1831.

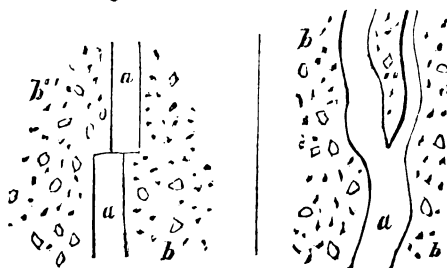
calcareous spar, arragonite, and zeolites. The structure is, in some places, spheroidal; in others, though rarely, columnar. I found dikes of amygdaloid, wacke, and prismatic basalt, intersecting the limestone at the bottom of the hollow called Gozzo degli Martiri, below Melilli.

Dikes.—Dikes of vesicular and amygdaloidal lava are also seen traversing peperino, west of Palagonia, near a mill by the road side.

In these cases we may suppose the peperino to have resulted from showers of volcanic sand and scoriæ, together with fragments of limestone thrown out by a submarine explosion, similar to that which lately gave rise to the volcanic island off Sciacca. When the mass was, to a certain degree, consolidated, it may have been rent open, so that the lava ascended through fissures, the walls of which were perfectly even and parallel. After the melted matter that filled the rent in No. 89 had cooled down, it must have been fractured and shifted horizontally by a lateral movement.

Fig. 89.

Fig. 90.



Horizontal section of dikes near Palagonia.

a. Lava.

b. Peperino, consisting of volcanic sand, mixed with fragments of lava and limestone.

In the second figure, No. 90, the lava has more the appearance of a vein which forced its way through the peperino, availing itself, perhaps, of a slight passage opened by rents caused by earthquakes. Some of the pores of the lava, in these dikes, are empty, while others are filled with carbonate of lime.

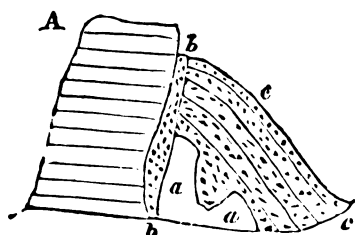
The annexed diagrams (Figs. 89. and 90.) represent a ground plan of the rocks as they are exposed to view on a horizontal surface. It is highly probable that similar appearances would be seen, if we could examine the floor of the sea in that part of the Mediterranean where the waves have recently washed away the new volcanic island; for when a superincumbent mass of ejected fragments has been removed by denudation, we may expect to see sections of dikes traversing tuff, or, in other words, sections of the channels of communication by which the subterranean lavas reached the surface.*

* See Vol. I. p. 356.

On the summit of the limestone platform of the Val di Noto I more than once saw analogous dikes, not only of lava but of volcanic tuff, rising vertically through the horizontal strata, and having no connexion with any igneous masses now apparent on the surface. In regard to the *dikes of tuff or peperino*, we may suppose them to have been open fissures at the bottom of the sea, into which volcanic sand and scorïæ were drifted by a current.

Tuffs and peperinos.—In the hill of Novera, between Vizzini and Militelli, a mass of limestone, horizontally stratified, comes in contact with inclined strata of tuff (see Fig. 91.); while a mixed calcareous and

Fig. 91.



A. Limestone.

aa. Calcareous breccia with fragments of lava.

b. Black tuff.

c. Tuff.

volcanic breccia, *a, a*, supports the inclined layers of tuff, *c*. The vertical fissure, *b b*, is filled with volcanic sand of a different colour. An inspection of this section will convince the reader that the limestone must have been greatly dislocated during the period of the submarine eruptions.

At the town of Vizzini a dike of lava intersects the argillaceous strata, and converts them into siliceous schist, which has been contorted and shivered into an immense number of fragments.

I have stated that the beds of limestone, clay, and sand, in the Val di Noto, are often partially intermixed with volcanic ejections, such as may have been showered down into the sea during eruptions, or may have been swept by rivers from the land. When the volcanic matter predominates, these compound rocks constitute the peperinos of the Italian mineralogists, some of which are highly calcareous, full of shells, and extremely hard, being capable of a high polish like marble. In some parts of the Val di Noto they are variously mottled with spots of red and yellow, and contain small angular fragments, similar to the lapilli thrown from volcanos.

It is recorded that, during the eruption of Graham Island off the southern coast of Sicily, the sea was in a state of violent ebullition, and filled for several weeks continuously with red or chocolate-coloured mud, consisting of finely comminuted scorïæ.* During this period, it is clear that the waves and currents that have since had power to sweep away the island, and disperse its materials far and wide over the bed of the sea,

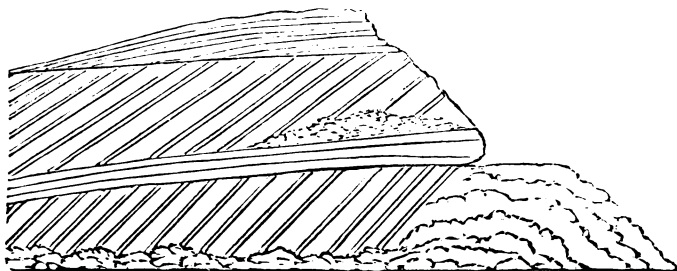
* Vol. I. p. 353.

must with still greater ease have carried to vast distances the fine red mud, which was seen boiling up from the bottom, so that it may have entered largely into the composition of modern peperinos.

Professor Hoffmann relates that, during the eruption (June 1831), the surface of the sea was strewed over, at the distance of thirty miles from the new volcano, with so dense a covering of scoriæ, that the fishermen were obliged to part it with their oars, in order to propel their boats through the water. It is, therefore, quite consistent with analogy, that we should find the ancient tuffs and peperinos so much more generally distributed than the submarine lavas.

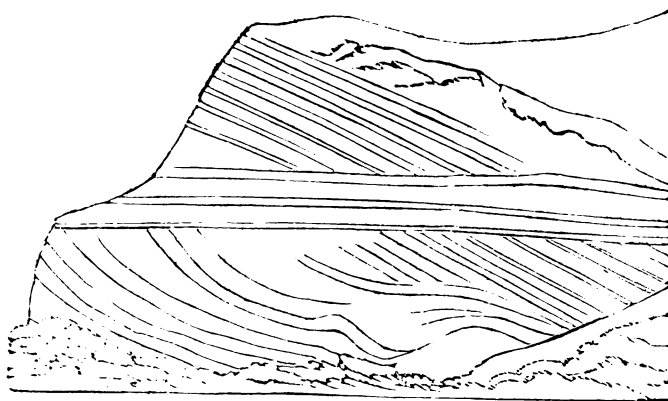
In the road which leads from Palagonia to Lago Naftia, and at the distance of about a mile and a half from the former place, there is a small pass where the hills on both sides consist of a calcareous grit, intermixed with some grains of volcanic sand.

Fig. 92.



*Section of calcareous grit and peperino, east of Palagonia. South side of pass.
Vertical height about thirty feet.*

Fig. 93



Section of the same beds on the north side of the pass.

The disposition of the strata, on both sides of the pass, is most singular, and remarkably well exposed, as the harder layers have resisted the weathering of the atmosphere and project in relief. The sections exhibited on both sides of the pass are nearly vertical, and do not exactly corres-

pond, as will be seen in the annexed diagrams (Figs. 92. and 93.). It is somewhat difficult to conceive in what manner this arrangement of the layers was occasioned; but we may, perhaps, suppose it to have arisen from the throwing down of calcareous sand and volcanic matter, upon steep slanting banks at the bottom of the sea, in which case they might have accumulated at various angles of between thirty and fifty degrees, as may be frequently seen in the sections of volcanic cones in Ischia and elsewhere. The denuding power of the waves may, then, have cut off the upper portion of these banks; so that nearly horizontal layers may have been superimposed unconformably, after which another bank may have been formed in a similar manner to the first.

Volcanic conglomerates.—In the Val di Noto we sometimes meet with conglomerates entirely composed of volcanic pebbles. They usually occur in the neighbourhood of masses of lava, and may, perhaps, have been the shingle produced by the wasting cliffs of small islands in a volcanic archipelago. The formation of similar beds of volcanic pebbles may now be seen in progress on the beach north of Catania, where the waves are undermining one of the modern lavas of Etna; and the same may also be seen on the shores of Ischia.

Proofs of gradual accumulation.—In one part of the great limestone formation near Letini, I found some imbedded volcanic pebbles, covered with full grown serpulæ, supplying a beautiful proof of a considerable interval of time having elapsed between the rounding of these pebbles and their inclosure in a solid stratum. I also observed, not far from Vizzini, a very striking illustration of the length of the intervals which occasionally separated the distinct lava currents. A bed of oysters, perfectly identifiable with our common eatable species, no less than *twenty feet in thickness*, is there seen resting upon a current of basaltic lava; upon the oyster-bed again is superimposed a second mass of lava, together with tuff or peperino. Near Galieri, not far from the same place, a horizontal bed, about a foot and a-half in thickness, composed entirely of a common Mediterranean coral (*Caryophyllia cespitosa*, Lam.), is also seen in the midst of the same series of alternating igneous and aqueous formations. These corals stand erect as they grew; and after being traced for hundreds of yards, are again found at a corresponding height on the opposite side of the valley.

Dip and direction.—The disturbance which the newer Pliocene strata have undergone in Sicily, subsequent to their deposition, varies greatly in degree in different places; in general, however, they are nearly horizontal, and are not often highly inclined. The calcareous schists, on which part of the town of Lentini is built, are much fractured, and dip at an angle of twenty-five degrees to the north-west. In some of the valleys in the neighbourhood an anticlinal dip is seen, the beds on one side being inclined to the north-west, and on the other to the south-east.

Throughout a considerable part of Sicily which I examined, the dips of the tertiary strata were north-east and south-west ; as, for example, in the district included between 'Terranuovo, Girgenti,' Caltanissetta, and Piazza, where there are several parallel lines, or ridges of elevation, which run from north-west to south-east.

CHAPTER VII.

NEWER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS—ETNA.

Marine and volcanic formations at the base of Etna—Their connexion with the strata of the Val di Noto—Bay of Trezza—Cyclopien isles—Fossil shells of recent species (p. 245.)—Basalt and altered rocks in the Isle of Cyclops—Internal structure of the cone of Etna—Val di Calanna (p. 250)—Val del Bove not an ancient crater—its precipices intersected by countless dikes—Scenery of the Val del Bove—Form, composition, and origin of the dikes (p. 254.)—Lavas and breccias intersected by them.

THE phenomena considered in the last chapter suggest many theoretical views of the highest interest in geology ; but before entering upon these topics I am desirous of describing some analogous formations in Valdemone.

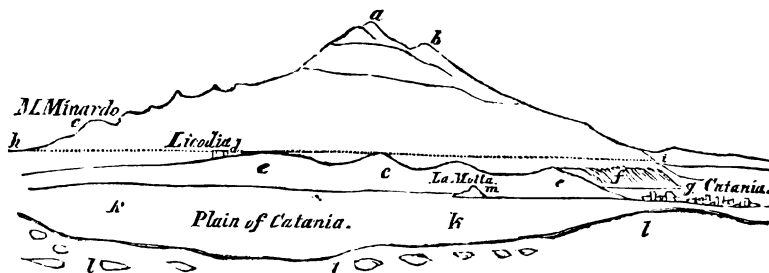
If the traveller passes along the table-land, formed by the great limestone of the Val di Noto, until it terminates suddenly near Primosole, he there sees the plain of Catania at his feet ; and before him, to the north, the cone of Etna (see Fig. 94. p. 242). At the base of the cone he beholds a low line of hills, *e e*, formed of clays and marls, associated with yellowish sand, similar to the formation provincially termed “ Creta,” in various parts of Sicily.*

This marine formation, which is composed partly of volcanic and partly of sedimentary rocks, is seen to lie below the modern lavas of Etna. To what extent it forms the base of the mountain cannot be observed, for want of sections of the lower part of the cone ; but the marine sub-Etnean beds are not seen to rise to a greater elevation than eight hundred, or, at the utmost, one thousand feet above the level of the sea. The annexed drawing is not a section, but an outline view of Etna, as seen from Primosole ; so that the proportional height of the volcanic cone, which is,

* See Creta, before described, ante, p. 235.

in reality, ten times greater than that of the hills of "Creta," at its base, is not expressed, the summit of the cone being ten or twelve miles more distant from the plain of Catania than Licodia.

Fig. 94.



View of Etna from the summit of the limestone platform of Primosole.

- a. Highest cone.
- b. Montagnuola.
- c. Monte Minardo, with smaller lateral cones above.
- d. Town of Licodia dei Monaci.
- e. Marine formation called creta, argillaceous and sandy beds with a few shells, and associated volcanic rocks.
- f. Escarpment of stratified subaqueous volcanic tuff, &c., north west of Catania.
- g. Town of Catania.
- h. i. Dotted line expressing the highest boundary along which the marine strata are occasionally seen.
- k. Plain of Catania.
- l. Limestone platform of Primosole of the Newer Pliocene.
- m. La Motta di Catania.

Connexion of the sub-Etnean strata with those of the Val di Noto.—These marine strata are found both on the southern and eastern foot of Etna, and it is impossible not to infer that they belong to the inferior argillaceous series of the Val di Noto (c, Fig. 88, ante, p. 234), which they resemble both in mineral and organic characters. In one locality they appear on the opposite sides of the Valley of the Simeto, covered on the north by the lavas of Etna, and on the south by the Val di Noto limestone.

Val di Noto.

Fig. 95.

Etna.



Section from Paternò by Lago di Naftia to Palagonia.

- a. Plain of the Simeto.
- b. Base of the cone of Etna, composed of modern lavas.
- c. Limestone of the Val di Noto.
- d. Clay, sand, and associated submarine volcanic rocks.

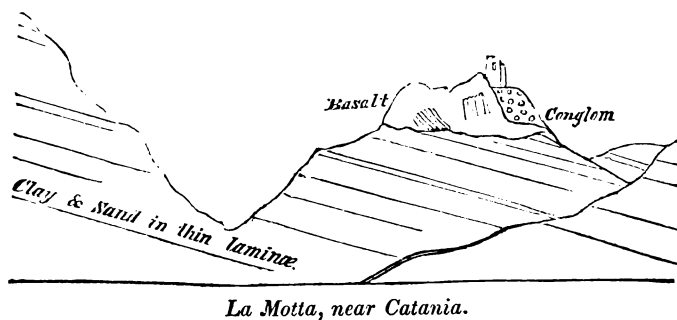
If in the country adjacent to the Lago di Naftia, through which the

annexed section is drawn, and in several other districts where the "creta" prevails, together with associated submarine lavas, and where there is no limestone capping, a volcano should now burst forth, and give rise to a great cone, the position, of such a cone would exactly correspond to that of the modern Etna, with relation to the rocks on which it rests.

Southern base of Etna.—The marine strata of clay and sand already alluded to, alternate in thin layers at the southern base of Etna, sometimes attaining a thickness of three hundred feet, or more, without any intermixture of volcanic matter. Crystals of selenite are dispersed through the clay, accompanied by a few shells, almost entirely of recent Mediterranean species. This formation of blue marl and yellow sand greatly resembles in character that of the Italian Subapennine beds, and, like them, often presents a surface denuded of vegetation, in consequence of the action of the rains on soft incoherent materials.

In travelling by Paternò, Misterbianco, and La Motta, we pass through deep narrow valleys excavated through these beds, which are sometimes capped, as at La Motta, by columnar basalt, accompanied by strata of tuff and volcanic conglomerate. (Fig. 96.)

Fig. 96.



The conglomerate is here composed of rolled masses of basalt, which may have originated either when first the lava was produced in a volcanic archipelago, or subsequently when the whole country was rising from beneath the level of the sea. Its occurrence in this situation is striking, as not a single pebble can be observed in the entire thickness of subjacent beds of sand and clay.

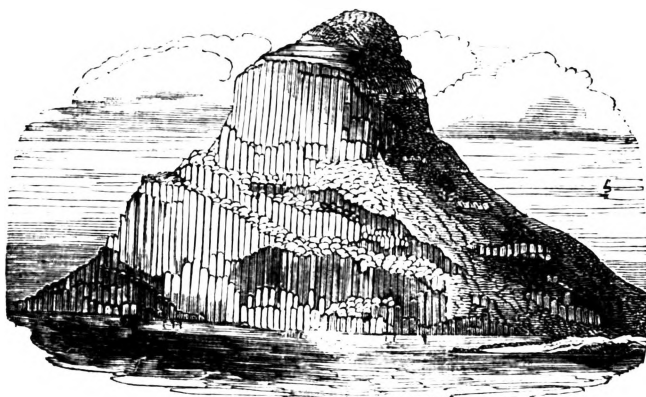
The dip of the marine strata, at the base of Etna, is by no means uniform; on the eastern side, for example, they are sometimes inclined towards the sea, and at others towards the mountain. Near the aqueduct at Adernò, on the southern side, I observed two sections, in quarries not far distant from each other, where beds of clay and yellow sand dipped, in one locality, at an angle of forty-five degrees to the east-south-east, and in the other at a much higher inclination in the opposite direction. These facts would be of small interest, if these mixed marine and

volcanic deposits, which encircle part of the base of Etna, had not been considered by a geologist of high authority as the outer margin of an *erhebungsgratere*.*

Near Catania the marine formation, consisting chiefly of volcanic tuff thinly laminated, terminates in a steep inland cliff, or escarpment, which is from six hundred to eight hundred feet in height. A low flat, composed of recent lava and volcanic sand, intervenes between the sea and the base of this escarpment, which may be well seen at Fasano. (*f*, Fig. 94.)

Eastern side of Etna—Bay of Trezza.—Proceeding northwards from Catania, we have opportunities of examining the same sub-Etnean formations laid open more distinctly in the modern sea cliffs, especially in the Bay of Trezza and in the Cyclopien islands (Dei Faraglioni), which may be regarded as the extremity of a promontory severed from the main land. Numerous are the proofs of submarine eruptions of high antiquity in this spot, where the argillaceous and sandy beds have been invaded and intersected by lava, and where those peculiar tufaceous breccias occur which result from ejections of fragmentary matter, projected from a volcanic vent. I observed many angular and hardened fragments of laminated clay (*creta*), in different states of alteration, between La Trezza and Nizzitta, and in the hills above Aci Castello, a town on the main land contiguous to the Cyclopien isles, which could not be mistaken by one

Fig. 97.



View of the Isle of Cyclops in the Bay of Trezza.†

familiar with Somma and the minor cones of Ischia, for any thing but masses thrown out by volcanic explosions. From the tuffs and marls of this district I collected a great variety of marine shells, almost all of which have been identified with species now inhabiting the Mediterra-

* See Vol. I. p. 366.

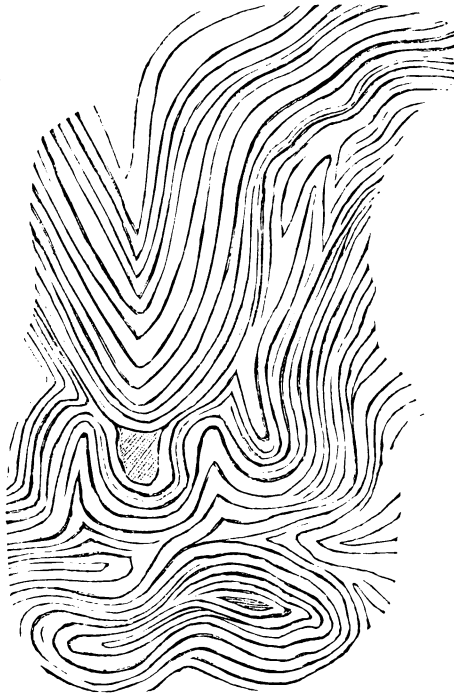
† This view of the Isle of Cyclops is from an original drawing by my friend Captain Basil Hall, R. N., and is a correction of one given in a former edition.

nean, and, for the most part, now frequent on the coast immediately adjacent.* Some few of these fossil shells retain part of their colour, which is the same as in their living analogues.

The loftiest of the Cyclopiian islets, or rather rocks, is about two hundred feet in height, the summit being formed of a mass of stratified clay (creta), the laminæ of which are occasionally subdivided by thin arenaceous layers. These strata dip to the N.W., and rest on a mass of columnar lava (see Fig. 97.), in which the tops of the pillars are weathered, and so rounded as to be often hemispherical. In some places in the adjoining and largest islet of the group, which lies to the north-eastward of that represented in the drawing (Fig. 97.), the overlying clay has been greatly altered, and hardened by the ingenious rock, and occasionally contorted in the most extraordinary manner; yet the lamination has not been obliterated, but, on the contrary, rendered much more conspicuous, by the indurating process.

The annexed wood-cut (Fig. 98.) is a careful representation of a portion of the altered rock, a few feet square, where the alternating thin

Fig. 98.



Contortions in the Newer Pliocene strata in the largest of the Cyclopiian Islands.

* A list of sixty-five species of shells, named by M. Deshayes, which I procured from the hills called Monte Cavalaccio, Rocca di Ferro, and Rocca di Bempolere (or Borgia), was published in App. II. of 1st edit. The occurrence of shells in these and some neighbouring localities was not unknown to the naturalists of Catania; but,

laminæ of sand and clay have put on the appearance which we often observe in some of the most contorted of the primary schists.

A great fissure, running from east to west, nearly divides this larger island into two parts, and lays open its internal structure. In the section thus exhibited, a dike of lava is seen, first cutting through an older mass of lava, and then penetrating the superincumbent tertiary strata. In one place, the lava ramifies and terminates in thin veins, from a few feet to a few inches in thickness (see Fig. 99.).

Fig. 99.



Newer Pliocene strata invaded by lava, Isle of Cyclops (horizontal section).

a. Lava. *b.* Laminated clay and sand. *c.* The same altered.

The arenaceous laminæ are much hardened at the point of contact, and the clays are converted into siliceous schist. In this island the altered rocks assume a honeycombed structure on their weathered surface, singularly contrasted with the smooth and even outline which the same beds present in their usual soft and yielding state.

The pores of the lava are sometimes coated, or entirely filled, with carbonate of lime, and with a zeolite resembling analcime, which has been called cyclopite. The latter mineral has also been found in small fissures traversing the altered marl, showing that the same cause which introduced the minerals into the cavities of the lava, whether we suppose sublimation or aqueous infiltration, conveyed it also into the open rents of the contiguous sedimentary strata.

Lavas of the Cyclopiæ Isles not currents from Etna.—The phenomena of the Bay of Trezza are very important; for it is evident that

having been recognised by them as *recent* species, they were supposed to have been carried up from the sea-shore to fertilize the soil, and therefore disregarded. Their position is well known to many of the peasants of the country, by whom the fossils are called "roba di diluvio."

the submarine lavas were produced by eruptions on the spot, an inference which follows not only from the presence of dikes and veins, but from those tuffs above Castello d'Aci, which contain angular fragments of hardened marl, evidently thrown up, together with the sand and scoriæ, by volcanic explosions. We may, therefore, suppose this volcanic action to have been as independent of the modern vents of Etna, as that which gave rise to the analogous formations in the Val di Noto. It is quite evident that the lavas of the Cyclopiæ Isles are not the lower extremities of currents which flowed down from the highest crater of Etna, or from the region where lateral eruptions are now frequent,—lavas which, after entering the sea, were afterwards upraised into their present position. It is more probable that the basalts of the Bay of Trezza, and those along the southern foot of Etna, at La Motta, Adernò, Paternò, Licodia, and other places, originated in the same sea in which the eruptions of the Val di Noto took place.

There are, however, no sections to prove that the central and oldest parts of Etna repose on similar submarine formations. The modern lavas of the volcano are continually extending their area, and covering, from time to time, a larger portion of the marine strata; but we know not where this operation commenced, so that we cannot demonstrate the posteriority of the whole cone to these Newer Pliocene strata.

We might imagine that when the volcanos of the Val di Noto were in activity, and when the eruptions of the Bay of Trezza were taking place, Etna already existed as a volcano, the upper part only of the cone projecting above the level of the waters, as in the case of Stromboli at present. By such an hypothesis, we might refer the origin of the older part of Etna to the same period as that of the sedimentary strata and volcanic rocks of the Val di Noto.

But there are no obvious grounds for inclining to such a theory; for we must admit that a sufficient series of ages has elapsed since the limestone of the Val di Noto was deposited, to allow it to be elevated in different places to the height of two thousand and three thousand feet, in which case there may also have been sufficient time for the growth of a volcanic pile like Etna, since the period when the Newer Pliocene strata now seen at the base of the volcano originated.

Internal Structure of the Cone of Etna.

In the second book I merely described that part of Etna which is known to have been formed during the historical era;* an insignificant portion of the whole mass. Nearly all the remainder may be referred to the tertiary period immediately antecedent to the *recent* epoch. The great

* Vol. I. p. 332.

cone is, in general, of a very symmetrical form, but is broken, on its eastern side, by a deep valley, called the Val del Bove, or in the provincial dialect of the peasants, "Val di Bué," for here the herdsmen

—— "in reductâ valle *mugientium*
Prospectat errantes greges."

Dr. Buckland was, I believe, the first English geologist who examined this valley with attention, and I am indebted to him for having described it to me, before I visited Sicily, as more worthy of attention than any single spot in that island, or perhaps in Europe.

Description of Plate VIII.—The accompanying view (Pl. VIII.) is part of a panoramic sketch which I made in November, 1828, and may assist the reader in comprehending some topographical details, to be alluded to in the sequel, although it can convey no idea of the picturesque grandeur of the scene.

The great lava-currents of 1819 and 1811 are seen pouring down from the higher parts of the valley, over-running the forests of the great plain, and rising up in the foreground on the left with a rugged surface, on which many hillocks and depressions appear, such as often characterize a lava-current immediately after its consolidation.

The small cone, No. 7, was formed in 1811, and was still smoking when I saw it in 1828. The other small volcano to the left, from which vapour is issuing, was, I believe, one of those formed in 1819.

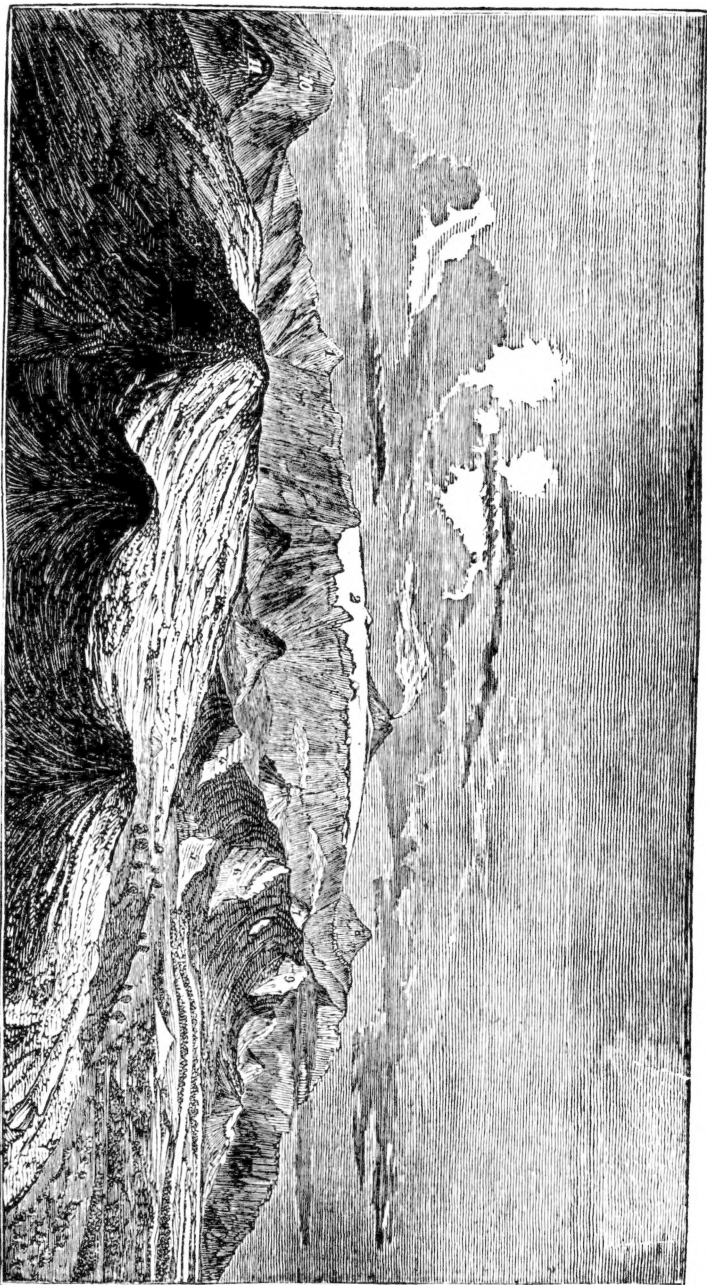
The following are the names of some of the other points indicated in the sketch :—

1. Montagnuola. 2. Torre del Filosofo. 3. Highest cone. 4. Lepra. 5. Finocchio. 6. Capra. 7. Cone of 1811. 8. Cima del Asino. 9. Musara. 10. Zocolaro. 11. Rocca di Calanna.

Description of Plate IX.—The second view (Pl. IX.) represents the same valley as seen from above, or looking directly down the Val del Bove, from the summit of the principal crater formed in 1819.* I am unable to point out the precise spot which this crater would occupy in the view represented in Plate VIII. ; but I conceive that it would appear in the face of the great precipice, near which the smoke issuing from the cone No. 7. is made to terminate. There are many ledges of rock on the face of that precipice where eruptions have occurred.

The circular form of the Val del Bove is well shown in this view (Pl. IX.). To the right and left are the lofty precipices which form the southern and northern sides of the great valley, and are intersected by dikes projecting in the manner afterwards to be described. In the dis-

* This view is taken from a sketch made by Mr. James Bridges, corrected after comparison with several sketches of my own.



VIEW LOOKING UP THE VAL DEL BOVE, ETNA.



VIEW OF VAL DEL BOVE, ETNA, AS SEEN FROM ABOVE, OR FROM CRATER OF 1819.

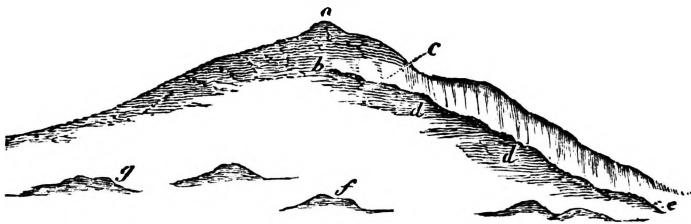
tance appears the “fertile region” of Etna, extending like a great plain along the sea coast.

The spots particularly referred to in the plate (Pl. IX.) are the following:

- a.* Cape Spartivento, in Italy, of which the outline is seen in the distance.
- b.* The promontory of Taormino, on the Sicilian coast.
- c.* The river Alcantra.
- d.* The small village of Riposto.
- f.* Town of Aci Reale.
- g.* Cyclopien Islands, or “Faraglioni,” in the bay of Trezza.
- h.* The great harbour of Syracuse.
- i.* The lake of Lentini.
- k.* City of Catania, near which is marked the course of the lava which flowed from the Monti Rossi in 1669, and destroyed part of the city.
- l.* To the left of the view is the crater of 1811, which is also shown at No. 7, in Plate VIII.
- m.* Rock of Musara, also seen at No. 9, in Plate VIII.
- e.* Valley of Calanna.

The Val del Bove, represented in the above drawings, commences near the summit of Etna, and descending into the woody region, is farther continued on one side by a second and narrower valley, called the Val di Calanna. Below this another, named the Val di St. Giacomo, begins, —a long narrow ravine, which is prolonged to the neighbourhood of Zaffarana (*e.* Fig. 100.), on the confines of the fertile region. These

Fig. 100.



Great Valley on the east side of Etna.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>a.</i> Highest cone. | <i>b.</i> Montagnuola. |
| <i>c.</i> Head of Val del Bove. | <i>d, d.</i> Serre del Solfizio. |
| <i>e.</i> Village of Zaffarana on the lower border of the woody region. | <i>f.</i> One of the lateral cones. |
| | <i>g.</i> Monti Rossi. |

natural incisions, into the side of the volcano, are of such depth that they expose to view a great part of the structure of the entire mass, which, in the Val del Bove, is laid open to the depth of from four thousand to five thousand feet from the summit of Etna. The geologist thus enjoys an opportunity of ascertaining how far the internal conformation of the cone corresponds with what he might have anticipated as the result of that mode of increase which has been witnessed during the historical era.

It is clear, from what was before said of the gradual manner in which the principal cone increases, partly by streams of lava and showers of

volcanic ashes ejected from the summit, partly by the throwing up of minor hills and the issuing of lava-currents on the flanks of the mountain, that the whole cone must consist of a series of cones enveloping others, the regularity of each being only interrupted by the interference of the lateral volcanos.

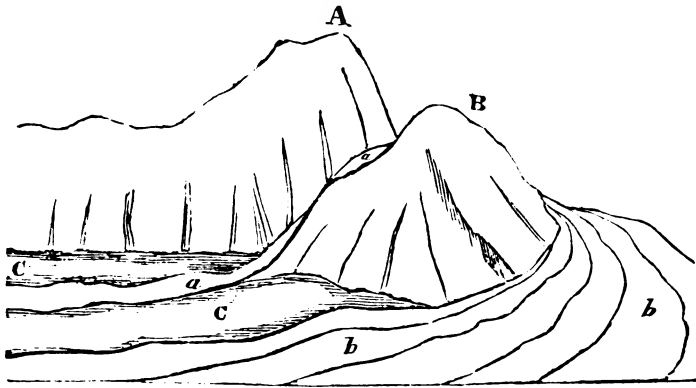
We might, therefore, have anticipated that a section of Etna, as exposed in a ravine which should begin near the summit and extend nearly to the sea, would correspond very closely to the section of the ancient Vesuvius, commencing with the escarpment of Somma, and ending with the Fossa Grande; but with this difference, that where the ravine intersects the woody region of Etna, indications must appear of changes brought about by lateral eruptions. Now the section, which can be traced from the head of the Val del Bove to the inferior borders of the woody region, fully answers such expectations. We find, almost everywhere, a series of layers of tuff and breccia interstratified with lavas, which slope gently to the sea, at an angle of from twenty to thirty degrees; and as we rise to the parallel of the zone of lateral eruptions, and still more as we approach the summit, we discover indications of disturbances, occasioned by the passage of lava from below, and the successive inhumation of lateral cones.

Val di Calanna.—On leaving Zaffarana, on the borders of the fertile region, we enter the ravine-like valley of St. Giacomo, and see on the north side, or on our right as we ascend, rising ground composed of the modern lavas of Etna. On our left, a lofty cliff, wherein a regular series of beds is exhibited, composed of tuffs and lavas, descending with a gentle inclination towards the sea. In this lower part of the section there are no intersecting dikes, nor any signs of minor cones interfering with the regular slope of the alternating volcanic products. If we then pass upwards through a defile, called the “Portello di Calanna,” we enter a second valley, that of Calanna, resembling the ravine before mentioned, but wider and much deeper. Here again we find, on our right, many currents of modern lava, piled one upon the other; and on our left a continuation of our former section, in a perpendicular cliff from four hundred to five hundred feet high. As this lofty wall sweeps in a curve, it has very much the appearance of the escarpment which Somma presents towards Vesuvius, and this resemblance is increased by the occurrence of two or three vertical dikes which traverse the gently-inclined volcanic beds. When I first beheld this precipice, I fancied that I had entered a lateral crater, but was soon undeceived, by discovering that on all sides, both at the head of the valley, in the hill of Zocolaro, and at its side and lower extremity, the dip of the beds was always in the same direction, all slanting to the east, or towards the sea, instead of sloping to the north, east, and south, as would have been the case had they constituted three walls of an ancient crater.

It is not difficult to explain how the valleys of St. Giacomo and Calanna

originated, when once the line of lofty precipices on the north side of them had been formed. Many lava currents flowing down successively from the higher regions of Etna, along the foot of a great escarpment of volcanic rock, have at length been turned by a promontory at the head of the valley of Calanna, which runs out at right angles to the great line of precipices. This promontory consists of the hills called Zocolaro and Calanna, and of a ridge of inferior height which connects them. (See Fig. 101.)

Fig. 101.



A. Zocolaro.

B. Monte di Calanna.

C. Plain at the head of the Valley of Calanna.

a. Lava of 1819 descending the precipice and flowing through the valley.*b.* Lavas of 1811 and 1819 flowing round the hill of Calanna.

The flows of melted matter have been deflected from their course by this projecting mass, just as a tidal current, after setting against a line of sea cliffs, is often thrown off into a new direction by some rocky head-land.

Lava streams, it is well known, become solid externally, even while yet in motion; and their sides may be compared to two rocky walls, which are sometimes inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees. When such streams descend a considerable slope at the base of a line of precipices, and are turned from their course by a projecting rock, they move right onwards in a new direction, so as to leave a considerable space (as in the valley of Calanna) between them and the cliffs which may be continuous below the point of deflection.

It happened in 1811 and 1819, that the flows of lava overtopped the ridge intervening between the hills of Zocolaro and Calanna, so that they fell in a cascade over a lofty precipice, and began to fill up the valley (*a*, Fig. 101.).*

The narrow cavity of St. Giacomo will admit of an explanation precisely similar to that already offered for Calanna.

* This is the cascade mentioned in Vol. I. p. 339.

Val del Bove.—After passing up through the defile, called the “Rocca di Calanna,” we enter a third valley of truly magnificent dimensions—the Val del Bove—a vast amphitheatre four or five miles in diameter, surrounded by nearly vertical precipices, varying from 1000 to above 3000 feet in height, the loftiest being at the upper end, and the height gradually diminishing on both sides. The feature which first strikes the geologist as distinguishing this valley from those before mentioned, is the prodigious multitudes of vertical dikes, which are seen in all directions traversing the volcanic beds. The circular form of this great chasm, and the occurrence of these countless dikes, amounting perhaps to several thousands in number, so forcibly recalled to my mind the phenomena of the Atrio del Cavallo, on Vesuvius, that I imagined once more that I had entered a vast crater, on a scale as far exceeding that of Somma as Etna surpasses Vesuvius in magnitude.

But having already been deceived in regard to the crescent-shaped precipice of the valley of Calanna, I began attentively to explore the different sides of the great amphitheatre, in order to satisfy myself whether the semicircular wall of the Val del Bove had ever formed the boundary of a crater, and whether the beds had the same quâquâ-versal dip which is so beautifully exhibited in the escarpment of Somma. If the supposed analogy between Somma and the Val del Bove should hold true, the tuffs and lavas, at the head of the valley, would dip to the west, those on the north side towards the north, and those on the southern side to the south. But such I did not find to be the inclination of the beds; they all dip towards the sea, or nearly east, as in the valley of Calanna.

There are undoubtedly exceptions to this general rule, which might deceive a geologist who was strongly prepossessed with a belief that he had discovered the hollow of an ancient crater. It is evident that, wherever lateral cones are intersected in the precipices, a series of tuffs and lavas, very similar to those which enter into the structure of the great cone, will be seen dipping at a much more rapid angle.

The lavas and tuffs, which have conformed to the sides of Etna, dip at angles of from fifteen to twenty-five degrees, while the slope of the lateral cones is from thirty-five to fifty degrees. Now, wherever we meet with sections of these buried cones in the precipices bordering the Val del Bove (and they are frequent in the cliffs called the Serre del Solfizio, and in those near the head of the valley not far from the rock of Musara), we find the beds dipping at high angles and inclined in various directions.

Scenery of the Val del Bove.—Without entering at present into any further discussions respecting the origin of the Val del Bove, I shall proceed to describe some of its most remarkable features. Let the reader picture to himself a large amphitheatre, five miles in diameter, and surrounded on three sides by precipices from 2000 to 3000 feet in height. If he has beheld that most picturesque scene in the chain of the Pyrenees,

the celebrated "cirque of Gavarnie," he may form some conception of the magnificent circle of precipitous rocks which inclose, on three sides, the great plain of the Val del Bove. This plain has been deluged by repeated streams of lava; and although it appears almost level when viewed from a distance, it is, in fact, more uneven than the surface of the most tempestuous sea. Besides the minor irregularities of the lava, the valley is in one part interrupted by a ridge of rocks, two of which, Musara and Capra, are very prominent. It can hardly be said that they

—— "like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land;"

for although, like the Trosachs in the Highlands of Scotland, they are of gigantic dimensions, and appear almost isolated as seen from many points, yet the stern and severe grandeur of the scenery which they adorn is not such as would be selected by a poet for a vale of enchantment. The character of the scene would accord far better with Milton's picture of the infernal world; and if we imagine ourselves to behold in motion, in the darkness of the night, one of those fiery currents which have so often traversed the great valley, we may well recall

—— "yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful."

The face of the precipices already mentioned is broken in the most picturesque manner by the vertical walls of lava which traverse them. These masses usually stand out in relief, are exceedingly diversified in form, and of immense altitude. In the autumn, their black outline may often be seen relieved by clouds of fleecy vapour which settle behind them, and do not disperse until mid-day, continuing to fill the valley while the sun is shining on every other part of Sicily, and on the higher regions of Etna.

As soon as the vapours begin to rise, the changes of scene are varied in the highest degree, different rocks being unveiled and hidden by turns, and the summit of Etna often breaking through the clouds for a moment with its dazzling snows, and being then as suddenly withdrawn from the view.

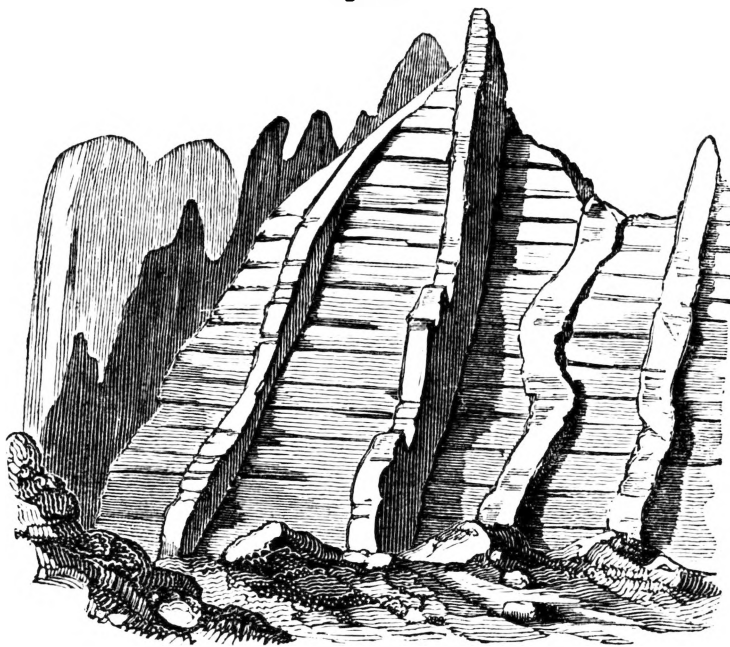
An unusual silence prevails; for there are no torrents dashing from the rocks, nor any movement of running water in this valley, such as may almost invariably be heard in mountainous regions. Every drop of water that falls from the heavens, or flows from the melting ice and snow, is instantly absorbed by the porous lava; and such is the dearth of springs, that the herdsman is compelled to supply his flocks, during the hot season, from stores of snow laid up in hollows of the mountain during winter.

The strips of green herbage and forest land, which have here and there escaped the burning lavas, serve, by contrast, to heighten the desolation of the scene. When I visited the valley, nine years after the eruption of 1819, I saw hundreds of trees, or rather the white skeletons of trees, on the borders of the black lava, the trunks and branches being all leafless, and deprived of their bark by the scorching heat emitted from the melted rock ; an image recalling those beautiful lines :—

—— “ As when heaven’s fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath.”

Form, composition, and origin of the dikes.—But without indulging the imagination any longer in descriptions of scenery, I may observe, that the dikes before mentioned form unquestionably the most interesting geological phenomena in the Val del Bove. Some of these are composed of trachyte, others of compact blue basalt with olivine. They vary in breadth from two to twenty feet and upwards, and usually project from the face of the cliffs, as represented in the annexed drawing (Fig. 102.).

Fig. 102.

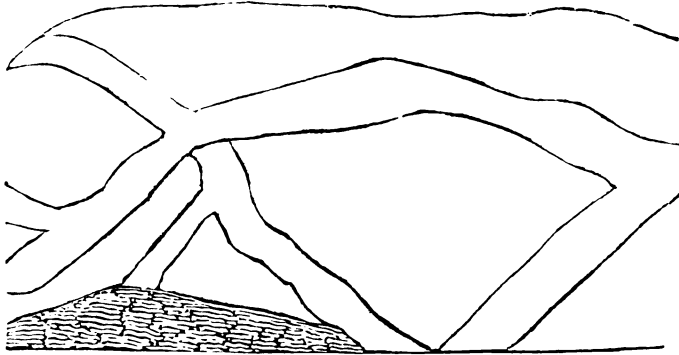


Dikes at the base of the Serre de Solfizio, Etna.

They consist of harder materials than the strata which they traverse, and therefore waste away less rapidly under the influence of that repeated congelation and thawing to which the rocks in this zone of Etna are exposed. The dikes are, for the most part, vertical, but sometimes they

run in a tortuous course through the tuffs and breccias, as represented in Fig. 103. In the escarpment of Somma, where similar walls of lava cut

Fig. 103.



Veins of Lava. Punto di Guimento.

through alternating beds of sand and scorix, a coating of coal-black rock, approaching in its nature and appearance to pitch-stone, is seen at the contact of the dike with the intersected beds. I did not observe such parting layers at the junction of the Etnean dikes which I examined, but they may perhaps be discoverable.

The geographical position of these dikes is most interesting, as they are very numerous near the head of the Val del Bove, where the cones of 1811 and 1819 were thrown up, as also in that zone of the mountain where lateral eruptions are frequent; whereas, in the Valley of Calanna, which is below that parallel, and in a region where lateral eruptions are extremely rare, scarcely any dikes are seen, and none whatever still lower in the valley of St. Giacomo. This is precisely what we might have expected, if we consider the vertical fissures now filled with rock to have been the feeders of lateral cones, or, in other words, the channels which gave passage to the lava currents and scorix that have issued from vents in the forest zone. There may be lateral cones in the parallel of the Valley of Calanna, in other parts of Etna, because the line of lateral eruptions is not everywhere at the same height above the sea; but in the section above alluded to there appeared to me an obvious connexion between the frequency of dikes and of lateral eruptions.

Some fissures may have been filled from above, but I did not see any which, by terminating downwards, gave proof of such an origin. Almost all the isolated masses in the Val del Bove, such as Capra, Musara, and others, are traversed by dikes, and may, perhaps, have partly owed their preservation to that circumstance, if at least the action of occasional floods has been one of the destroying causes in the Val del Bove; for there is nothing which affords so much protection to a mass of strata against the undermining action of running water, as a perpendicular dike of hard rock.

In the accompanying drawing (Fig. 104.) the flowing of the lavas of 1811 and 1819, between the rocks Finochio, Capra, and Musara, is represented.

Fig. 104.



View of the rocks Finochio, Capra, and Musara, Val del Bove.

The height of the two last-mentioned isolated masses has been much diminished by the elevation of their base, caused by these currents. They may, perhaps, be the remnants of cones which existed before the Val del Bove was formed, and may hereafter be once more buried by the lavas that are now accumulating in the valley.

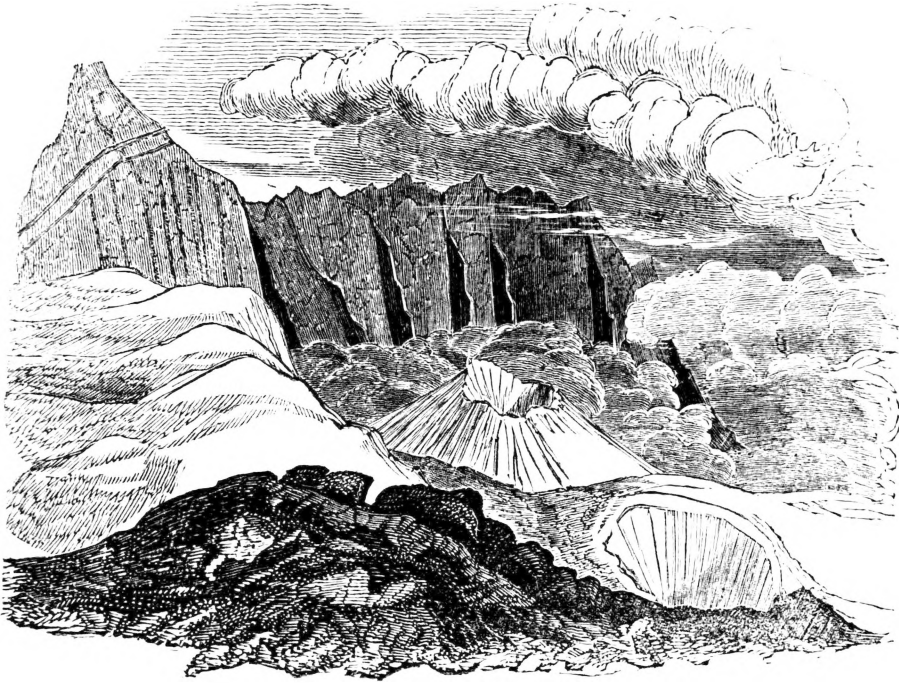
From no point of view are the dikes more conspicuous than from the summit of the highest cone of Etna; a view of some of them are given in the annexed drawing (Fig. 105. p. 257).

Lavas and breccias.—In regard to the volcanic masses which are intersected by dikes in the Val del Bove, they consist, in great part, of gray-stone lavas, of an intermediate character between basalt and trachyte, and partly of the trachytic varieties of lava. Beds of scorix and sand also, are very numerous, alternating with breccias formed of angular blocks of igneous rock. It is possible that some of the breccias may be referred to aqueous causes, as we have before seen that great floods do occasionally sweep down the flanks of Etna when eruptions take place in winter, and when the snows are melted by lava.

Many of the angular fragments may have been thrown out by volcanic explosions, which, falling on the hardened surface of moving lava currents, may have been carried to a considerable distance. It may also happen, that when lava advances very slowly, in the manner of the flow of 1819, described in the first volume,* the angular masses resulting from

* Page 339.

Fig. 105.



View from the summit of Etna into the Val del Bove.

*The small cone and crater immediately below were among those formed during the eruptions of 1810 and 1811.**

the frequent breaking of the mass, as it rolls over upon itself, may produce these breccias. It is at least certain, that the upper portion of the lava currents of 1811 and 1819 now consist of angular masses to the depth of many yards.

D'Aubuisson has compared the surface of one of the ancient lavas of Auvergne to that of a river suddenly frozen over by the stoppage of immense fragments of drift-ice, a description perfectly applicable to these modern Etnean flows.

* This drawing is part of a panoramic sketch which I made from the summit of the cone, December 1, 1828, when every part of Etna was free from clouds except the Val del Bove.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEWER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS—ETNA, *continued*.

Speculations on the origin of the Val del Bove on Etna—Subsidences—Antiquity of the cone of Etna—Mode of computing the age of volcanos—Their growth analogous to that of exogenous trees (p. 260.)—Period required for the production of the lateral cones of Etna—Whether signs of Diluvial Waves are observable on Etna.

Origin of the Val del Bove.

BEFORE concluding my observations on the cone of Etna, the structure of which has been considered in the last chapter, I desire to call the reader's attention to several questions:—first, in regard to the probable origin of the great valley already described; secondly, whether any estimate can be made of the length of the period required for the accumulation of the great cone; and, thirdly, whether there are any signs on the surface of the older part of the mountain, of those devastating waves which, according to the theories of some geologists, have swept again and again over our continents.

I explained in the last chapter my reasons for not assenting to the opinion, that the great cavity on the eastern side of Etna was the hollow of a vast crater, from which the volcanic masses of the surrounding walls were produced. On the other hand, it seems impossible to ascribe the valley to the action of running water alone; for if it had been excavated exclusively by that power, its depth would have increased in the descent; whereas, on the contrary, the precipices are most lofty at the upper extremity, and diminish gradually on approaching the lower region of the volcano.

The structure of the surrounding walls is such as we should expect to see exhibited on any other side of Etna, if a cavity of equal depth should be caused, whether by subsidence, or by the blowing up of part of the flanks of the volcano, or by either of these causes co-operating with the removing action of running water.

Dr. Daubeny informs me, that during the eruption of Vesuvius in 1834, the mountain, and all the adjacent country was violently shaken on the night of August 24. At the same time, two small conical hillocks of volcanic matter which existed in the great crater disappeared. They do not seem to have been ejected, or blown into the air, but to have been actually swallowed up in some internal cavity.

It is recorded, as was stated in the history of earthquakes, that in the year 1772 a great subsidence took place on Papandayang, the largest vol-

cano in the island of Java, an extent of ground, *fifteen miles in length and six in breadth*, covered by no less than forty villages, was engulfed, and the cone lost 4000 feet of its height.*

Now we might imagine a similar event, or series of subsidences to have formerly occurred on the eastern side of Etna, although such catastrophes have not been witnessed in modern times, or only on a very trifling scale. A narrow ravine, about a mile long, twenty feet wide, and from twenty to thirty-six in depth, has been formed, within the historical era, on the flanks of the volcano, near the town of Mascalucia; and a small circular tract, called the Cisterna, near the summit, sank down in the year 1792 to the depth of about forty feet, and left on all sides of the chasm a vertical section of the beds, exactly resembling those which are seen in the precipices of the Val del Bove. At some remote periods, therefore, we might suppose more extensive portions of the mountain to have fallen in during great earthquakes.

But some geologists will, perhaps, incline to the opinion, that the removed mass was blown up by paroxysmal explosions, such as that which in the year 79 destroyed the ancient cone of Vesuvius, and gave rise to the escarpment of Somma. The Val del Bove, it will be remembered, lies within the zone of lateral eruptions; so that a repetition of volcanic explosions might have taken place, after which the action of running water may have contributed powerfully to degrade the rocks, and to transport the materials to the sea. I have before alluded to the effects of a violent flood, which swept through the Val del Bove in the year 1755, when a fiery torrent of lava had suddenly overflowed a great depth of snow in winter.†

In the present imperfect state of our knowledge of the history of volcanos, we have some difficulty in deciding on the relative probability of these hypotheses; but if we embrace the theory of explosions from below, the cavity would still by no means accord with the theory of the so-called "elevation craters."

Antiquity of the Cone of Etna.

It was before remarked, that confined notions in regard to the quantity of past time have tended, more than any other prepossessions, to retard the progress of sound theoretical views in Geology;‡ the inadequacy of our conceptions of the earth's antiquity having cramped the freedom of our speculations in this science, very much in the same way as a belief in the existence of a vaulted firmament once retarded the progress of astronomy. It was not until Descartes assumed the indefinite extent of the celestial spaces, and removed the supposed boundaries of the uni-

* Vol. I. p. 415.

† Ibid. p. 339.

‡ Ibid. p. 82.

verse, that just opinions began to be entertained of the relative distances of the heavenly bodies ; and until we habituate ourselves to contemplate the possibility of an indefinite lapse of ages having been comprised within each of the more modern periods of the earth's history, we shall be in danger of forming most erroneous and partial views in Geology.

Mode of computing the age of volcanos.—If history had bequeathed to us a faithful record of the eruptions of Etna, and a hundred other of the principal active volcanos of the globe, during the last three thousand years,—if we had an exact account of the volume of lava and matter ejected during that period, and the times of their production,—we might, perhaps, be able to form a correct estimate of the average rate of the growth of a volcanic cone. For we might obtain a mean result from the comparison of the eruptions of so great a number of vents, however irregular might be the development of the igneous action in any one of them, if contemplated singly during a brief period.

It would be necessary to balance protracted periods of inaction against the occasional outburst of paroxysmal explosions. Sometimes we should have evidence of a repose of seventeen centuries, like that which was interposed in Ischia, between the end of the fourth century, B. C., and the beginning of the fourteenth century of our era.* Occasionally a tremendous eruption, like that of Jorullo, would be recorded, giving rise, at once, to a considerable mountain.

If we desire to approximate to the age of a cone such as Etna, we ought first to obtain some data in regard to the thickness of matter which has been added during the historical era, and then endeavour to estimate the time required for the accumulation of such alternating lavas and beds of sand and scorix as are superimposed upon each other in the Val del Bove ; afterwards we should try to deduce, from observations on other volcanos, the more or less rapid increase of burning mountains in all the different stages of their growth.

Mode of increase of volcanos analogous to that of exogenous trees.—There is a considerable analogy between the mode of increase of a volcanic cone and that of trees of *exogenous* growth. These trees augment both in height and diameter, by the successive application externally of cone upon cone of new ligneous matter ; so that if we make a transverse section near the base of the trunk, we intersect a much greater number of layers than nearer to the summit. When branches occasionally shoot out from the trunk they first pierce the bark ; and then, after growing to a certain size, if they chance to be broken off, they may become inclosed in the body of the tree, as it augments in size, forming knots in the wood which are themselves composed of layers of ligneous matter, cone within cone.

* See Vol. I. p. 308.

In like manner, a volcanic mountain, as we have seen, consists of a succession of conical masses enveloping others, while lateral cones, having a similar internal structure, often project, in the first instance, like branches from the surface of the main cone, and then becoming buried again, are hidden like the knots of a tree.

We can ascertain the age of an oak or pine, by counting the number of concentric rings of annual growth, seen in a transverse section near the base, so that we may know the date at which the seedling began to vegetate. The Baobab-tree of Senegal (*Adansonia digitata*) is supposed to exceed almost any other in longevity; Adanson inferred that one which he measured, and found to be thirty feet in diameter, had attained the age of 5150 years. Having made an incision to a certain depth, he first counted three hundred rings of annual growth, and observed what thickness the tree had gained in that period. The average rate of growth of younger trees, of the same species, was then ascertained, and the calculation made according to a supposed mean rate of increase. De Candolle considers it not improbable, that the celebrated *Taxodium* of Chapultepec, in Mexico (*Cupressus disticha*, Linn.), which is 117 feet in circumference, may be still more aged.*

It is, however, impossible, until more data are collected respecting the average intensity of the volcanic action, to make any thing like an approximation to the age of a cone like Etna; because, in this case the successive envelopes of lava and scorix are not continuous, like the layers of wood in a tree, and afford us no definite measure of time. Each conical envelope is made up of a great number of distinct lava currents and showers of sand and scorix, differing in quantity, and which may have been accumulated in unequal periods of time. Yet we cannot fail to form the most exalted conception of the antiquity of this mountain, when we consider that its base is about ninety miles in circumference; so that it would require ninety flows of lava, each a mile in breadth at their termination, to raise the present foot of the volcano as much as the average height of one lava current.

There are no records within the historical era which lead to the opinion, that the altitude of Etna has materially varied within the last two thousand years. Of the eighty most conspicuous minor cones which adorn its flanks, only one of the largest, Monti Rossi, has been produced within the times of authentic history. Even this hill, thrown up in the year 1669, although 450 feet in height, only ranks as a cone of second magnitude. Monte Minardo, near Bronte, rises, even now, to the height of 750 feet, although its base has been elevated by more modern lavas and ejections. The dimensions of these larger cones appear to bear testimony to *paroxysms* of volcanic activity, after which we may conclude, from anal-

* On the Longevity of Trees, Bibliot. Univ., May, 1831.

ogy, that the fires of Etna remained dormant for many years—since nearly a century of rest has sometimes followed a violent eruption in the historical era. It must also be remembered, that of the small number of eruptions which occur in a century, one only is estimated to issue from the summit of Etna for every two that proceed from the sides. Nor do all the lateral eruptions give rise to such cones as would be reckoned amongst the smallest of the eighty hills above enumerated; some of them produce merely insignificant monticules, which are soon afterwards buried by showers of ashes.

How many years then must we not suppose to have been expended in the formation of the eighty cones? It is difficult to imagine that a fourth part of them have originated during the last thirty centuries. But if we conjecture the whole of them to have been formed in twelve thousand years, how inconsiderable an era would this portion of time constitute in the history of the volcano! If we could strip off from Etna all the lateral monticules now visible, together with the lavas and scorix that have been poured out from them, and from the highest crater, during the period of their growth, the diminution of the entire mass would be extremely slight! Etna might lose, perhaps, several miles in diameter at its base, and some hundreds of feet in elevation; but it would still be the loftiest of Sicilian mountains, studded with other cones, which would be recalled, as it were, into existence by the removal of the rocks under which they are now buried.

There seems nothing in the deep sections of the Val del Bove to indicate that the lava currents of remote periods were greater in volume than those of modern times; and there are abundant proofs that the countless beds of solid rock and scorix were accumulated, as now, in succession. On the grounds, therefore, already explained, we must infer that a mass eight thousand or nine thousand feet in thickness, must have required an immense series of ages anterior to our historical periods for its growth; yet the whole must be regarded as the product of a modern portion of the Newer Pliocene epoch. Such, at least, is the conclusion that seems to follow from the geological data already detailed, which show that the oldest parts of the mountain, if not of posterior date to the marine strata around its base, were at least of coeval origin.

Whether signs of Diluvial Waves are observable on Etna.—Some geologists contend, that the sudden elevation of large continents from beneath the waters of the sea have again and again produced waves which have swept over vast regions of the earth, and left enormous rolled blocks strewn upon the surface.* That there are signs of local floods of extreme violence, on various parts of the surface of the dry land, is incontrovertible, and I have endeavoured to point out causes which must for ever con-

* Sedgwick, Anniv. Address to the Geol. Soc., p. 35. Feb. 1831.

tinue to give rise to such phenomena; but such appearances afford no geological proof of a general cataclysm. It is clear that no devastating wave has passed over the forest zone of Etna, since any of the lateral cones before mentioned were thrown up; for none of these heaps of loose sand and scorix could have resisted for a moment the denuding action of a violent flood.

To some, perhaps, it may appear that hills of such incoherent materials cannot be of very great antiquity, because the mere action of the atmosphere must, in the course of several thousand years, have obliterated their original forms. But there is no weight in this objection; for the older hills are covered with trees and herbage, which protect them from waste; and in regard to the newer ones, such is the porosity of their component materials, that the rain which falls upon them is instantly absorbed, and, for the same reason that the rivers on Etna have a subterranean course, there are none descending the sides of the minor cones.

No sensible alteration has been observed in the form of these cones since the earliest periods of which there are memorials; and there seems no reason for anticipating that in the course of the next ten thousand or twenty thousand years they will undergo any great alteration in their appearance, unless they should be shattered by earthquakes or covered by volcanic ejections.

I shall hereafter point out, that in other parts of Europe, similar loose cones of scorix, probably of higher antiquity than the whole mass of Etna, stand uninjured, at inferior elevations above the level of the sea.

CHAPTER IX.

NEWER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS OF SICILY.

Growth of submarine formations gradual—Their rise above the level of the sea—Their present position proves modifications of the earth's crust at great depths, during the Newer Pliocene period—Alterations of the surface of Sicily during and since its emergence—Forms of the Sicilian valleys—Sea cliffs—Proofs of successive elevation (p. 268.)—Valleys in the Newer Pliocene districts correspond in form to those of other regions—Migrations of animals and plants since the emergence of the newer Pliocene strata—Some species older than the stations they inhabit—Recapitulation.

HAVING in the last two chapters described the tertiary formations of the Val di Noto and Valdemone, both igneous and aqueous, I shall now pro-

ceed more fully to consider their origin, and the manner in which they may be supposed to have assumed their present position. The consideration of this subject may be naturally divided into three parts: first, we may inquire in what manner the submarine formations were accumulated beneath the waters; secondly, whether they emerged slowly or suddenly, and to what modifications in the earth's crust, at considerable depths below the surface, their rise may be attributed; thirdly, the mutations which the surface and its inhabitants have undergone during and since the period of emergence.

Growth of submarine formations.—First, then, we are to inquire in what manner the subaqueous masses, whether volcanic or sedimentary, may have been formed. On this subject a few observations will suffice; for by reference to the two last books, the reader will learn how a single stratum, whether of sand, clay, or limestone, may be thrown down at the bottom of the sea, and how shells and other organic remains may become imbedded in it. He will also understand how one sheet of lava, or one bed of scorix and volcanic sand, may be spread out over a wide area, and how, at a subsequent period, a second bed of sand, clay, or limestone, or a second lava stream, may be superimposed, so that in the lapse of ages a mountain mass shall be produced.

It is enough that we should behold a single course of bricks or stones laid by the mason upon another, in order to comprehend how a massive edifice, such as the Coliseum at Rome, was erected; and we can have no difficulty in conceiving that a sea, three hundred or four hundred fathoms deep, might be filled up by sediment and lava, provided we admit an indefinite lapse of ages for the accumulation of the materials.

The sedimentary and volcanic masses of the newer Pliocene era, which, in the Val di Noto, attain the thickness of two thousand feet, are subdivided into a vast number of strata and lava streams, each of which were originally formed on the subaqueous surface, just as the tuffs and lavas, whereof sections are laid open in the Val del Bove, were each in their turn external additions to the Etnean cone.

It is also clear, that before any part of the mass of submarine origin began to rise above the waters, the uppermost strata of the whole must have been deposited; so that if the date of the origin of these masses be comparatively recent, still more so is the period of their rise above the level of the sea.

Subaqueous formations, how raised.—In what manner, then, and by what agency, did this rise of the subaqueous formations take place? We have seen that a vast area in Scandinavia has been slowly rising for centuries above its former level. We have also seen that, in the year 1819, a tract of country in Cutch, more than fifty miles long and sixteen broad, was permanently upraised to the height of ten feet above its former position, and the earthquake which accompanied this wonderful variation of

level is reported to have terminated by a volcanic eruption at Bhooj. It also appeared that when the Monte Nuovo was thrown up, in the year 1538, a large fissure approached the small town of Tripergola, emitting a vivid light, and throwing out ignited sand and scorix.* At length this opening reached a shallow part of the sea close to the shore, and then widened into a large chasm, out of which were discharged blocks of lava, pumice, and ashes. But no current of melted matter flowed from the orifice, although it is perfectly evident that lava existed below in a fluid state, since so many portions of it were cast up in the form of scorix into the air. It will be remembered that the coast near Puzzuoli rose, at that time, to the height of more than twenty feet above its former level, and that it has remained permanently upheaved to this day.†

On a review of the whole phenomena, it appears not improbable that the elevated country was forced upwards by lava which did not escape, but which, after causing violent earthquakes, during several preceding months, produced at length a fissure from whence it discharged gaseous fluids, together with sand and scorix. The intruded mass then cooled down at a certain distance below the uplifted surface, and constituted a solid and permanent foundation.

If an habitual vent had previously existed near Puzzuoli, such as we may suppose to remain always open in the principal ducts of Vesuvius or Etna, the lava might, perhaps, have flowed over upon the surface, instead of heaving upwards the superficial strata. In that case there might have been the same conversion of sea into land, the only difference being, that the lava would have been uppermost, instead of the tufaceous strata containing shells, now seen in the plain of La Starza, and on the site of the Temple of Serapis.

But when we remember that the tertiary strata of the Val di Noto have attained the height of from fifty to two thousand feet, and in the central parts of Sicily, as at Castrogiovanni, an elevation of about three thousand feet above the level of the sea, are we prepared to suppose a solid support of igneous rock, equal in volume to the upraised tract, to have been generated below since the Newer Pliocene strata were formed? In reply to this question I may remark, that the entire mass of Iceland is said to be volcanic, an island 260 miles long by 200 in breadth, and which rises, in some spots, to the height of 6000 feet. Had the melted matter in this case been prevented from reaching the surface by the weight and tenacity of superincumbent rocks, it might, perhaps, have heaved up a district three times as extensive as Sicily. But whether we adopt this or any other hypothesis as the cause of elevation—whether we introduce the evolution of gases, the liquefaction of rocks, or in cases like that of Sweden, their slow and gradual expansion by heat, on whatever mode of operation we

* Vol. I. p. 309.

† Ibid. p. 432.

speculate, it is still impossible to escape from the conclusion, that some very extraordinary change has taken place in part of the earth's crust, immediately underneath Sicily, since the Mediterranean was inhabited by the existing species of testacea. We must surely admit that the permanent upheaving of a country two or three thousand square miles in area, to an additional height of several hundred yards, implies either the intrusion of new mineral matter into the fundamental rocks, or some great modification in their character.

It would be superfluous to repeat here what has been said of the probable causes of volcanic agency, operating at considerable depths, or what has been called by some geologists *plutonic action*.* But it is important to reflect, that the position of the Newer Pliocene strata, in Sicily and elsewhere, indicates that this action has been developed on a great scale since the recent species of testacea abounded. The formation of a cone, such as Etna, or of the sedimentary and volcanic rock of the Val di Noto, are superficial mutations which are perfectly insignificant in a geological point of view, when compared with the contemporaneous changes above alluded to, which must have been going on *out of sight*. The result of these operations may one day be exposed to view ; but a great lapse of time will probably be required before masses formed or altered at great depths can be brought up to the surface.

Quicquid sub terrâ est, in apricum proferet ætas
Defodiet condetque nitentia.

The deposits of our own period may sink down, and be hidden in the depths of the earth, when the plutonic formations of the Newer Pliocene era shall have become visible ; and it may then be impossible to ascertain, by geological evidence, the relative date of rocks formed in the subterranean regions during the Newer Pliocene ages, and to prove that they were produced at precisely the same time with the limestone and argillaceous strata of the Val di Noto.

Changes of the Surface during and since the Emergence of the Newer Pliocene Strata.

Valleys.—Geologists who are accustomed to attribute a great proportion of the inequalities of the earth's surface to the excavating power of running water during a long series of ages, will probably look for the signs of remarkable freshness in the aspect of countries so recently elevated as the parts of Sicily already described. There is, however, nothing in the external configuration of that country which would strike the eye of the most practised observer, as peculiar and distinct in character from any other districts in Europe which are of much higher antiquity. The general outline of the hills and valleys would accord perfectly well with

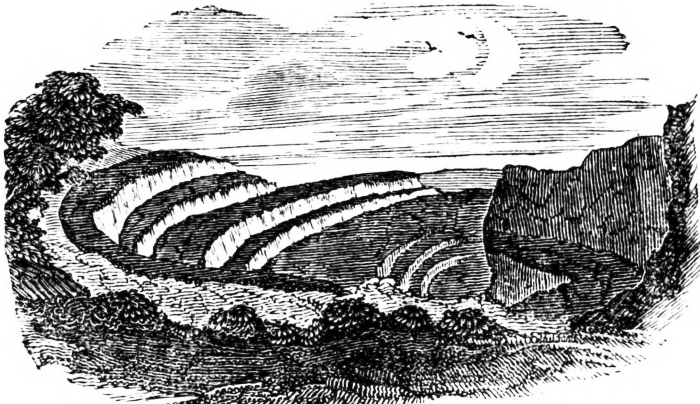
* See Book II. chaps. xviii and xix.

what may often be observed in regard to other regions of equal altitude above the level of the sea.

It is true that, towards the central parts of the island, where the argillaceous deposits are of great thickness, as around Castrogiovanni, Caltanissetta, and Piazza, the torrents are observed annually to deepen the ravines in which they flow; and the traveller occasionally finds that the narrow mule path, instead of winding round the head of a ravine, terminates abruptly in a deep trench which has been hollowed out, during the preceding winter, through soft clay. But throughout a great part of Italy, where the marls and sands of the Subapennine hills are elevated to considerable heights, the same rapid degradation is often perceived.

In the limestone districts of the Val di Noto, the strata are for the most part nearly horizontal, and on each side of the valley form a succession of ledges or small terraces, instead of descending in a gradual slope towards the river-plain in the manner of the argillaceous formations. When there is a bend in the valley, the exact appearance of an amphitheatre with a range of marble seats is produced. A good example of this configuration occurs near the town of Melilli, in the Val di Noto, as seen in the annexed view (Fig. 106.). In the south of the island, as near

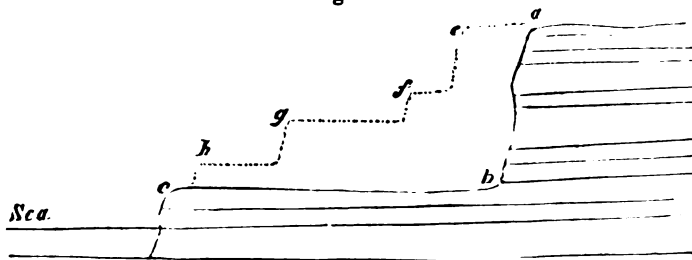
Fig. 106.



Valley called Gozzo degli Martiri, below Melilli.

Spaccaforno, Scicli, and Modica, precipitous rocks of white limestone, ascending to the height of five hundred feet, have been carved out into the same form. It is not easy to account for this phenomenon; but it may, perhaps, be due to the action of the sea during the rise of the land, for every portion of the cliffs bordering these valleys may, in its turn, have been washed by the waves. We find evident signs of two periods of elevation in a long range of inland cliff on the east side of the Val di Noto, both to the north of Syracuse, beyond Melilli, and to the south beyond the town of Noto. The great limestone formation terminates suddenly towards the sea in a lofty precipice *a, b*, (Fig. 107.) which varies in height

Fig. 107.



from 500 to 700 feet, and may remind the English geologist of some of the most perpendicular escarpments of our chalk and oolite. Between the base of the precipice *a, b*, and the sea is an inferior platform, *c, b*, consisting of similar white limestone. All the strata dip towards the sea, but are usually inclined at a very slight angle; they are seen to extend uninterruptedly from the base of the escarpment into the platform, showing distinctly that the lofty cliff was not produced by a fault or vertical shift of the beds, but by the removal of a considerable mass of rock. Hence we may conclude that the sea, which is now undermining the cliffs of the Sicilian coast, reached at some former period the base of the precipice *a, b*, at which time the surface of the terrace *c, b*, must have been covered by the Mediterranean. Here, then, we have proofs of at least two elevations, but there may have been many others.

Suppose, for example, that a series of escarpments, *e, f, g, h*, once existed, and that during a long interval, free from subterraneous movements, the sea advances along the line *c, b*, all preceding cliffs must have been swept away one after the other, and reduced to the single precipice *a, b*.

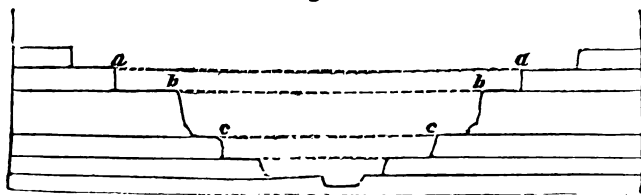
I have stated, in the first volume, that the waves washed the base of the inland cliff of Puzzuoli, in the Bay of Baiæ, within the historical era, and that the retiring of the sea was caused, in the sixteenth century, by an upheaving of the land to the height of twenty feet above its original level.* At that period, a terrace twenty feet high in some parts was laid dry between the sea and the cliff; but the Mediterranean is hastening by its encroachments to resume its former position, and the terrace will be eventually destroyed, and every trace of the *successive* rise of the land obliterated.

In those valleys where the opposite sides form a great flight of steps from top to bottom we may suppose the sea to have stood successively at many different levels, as at *aa, bb, cc*, in the annexed figure (108.); and if the separate movements of elevation followed each other more rapidly as the land continued to rise, then would the gradual contraction of the valley in its lower parts be explained, for the intervals of time would

* Page 432.

be shortened in which each successive excavation was accomplished. This hypothesis by no means requires that terraces and small precipices should be always formed on the opposite sides of each valley at corres-

Fig. 108.



ponding levels; for the amount and depth of erosion by the waves would be determined by the set of the winds and currents, the varying hardness of the strata, the form of the ancient coast, and a variety of other accidents.

The line of some of the valleys near Lentini has evidently been determined mainly by the direction of the elevatory force, as there is an anticlinal dip in the strata on either side of the valley. The same is, probably, the case in regard to the great valley of the Anapo, which terminates at Syracuse.

I have been led into these observations, in order to show that the principal features in the physical geography of Sicily are by no means inconsistent with the hypothesis of the successive elevation of the country by the intermittent action of ordinary earthquakes. On the other hand, the magnitude of the valleys, and their correspondence in form with those of other parts of the globe, seem to lend countenance to the theory of the slow and gradual rise of subaqueous strata.

The excavation of valleys, as was before remarked, must always proceed with the greatest rapidity when the levels of a country are undergoing alteration from time to time by earthquakes; and it is principally when a country is rising or sinking by successive movements, that the power of aqueous causes, such as tides, currents, rivers, and land-floods, is exerted with the fullest energy.*

In order, therefore, to explain the present appearance of the surface, we must first go back to the time when the Sicilian formations were mere shoals at the bottom of the sea, in which the currents may have scooped out channels here and there. We must next suppose these shoals to have become small islands, of which the cliffs were thrown down from time to time, as were those of Gian Greco, in Calabria, during the earthquake of 1783. The waves and currents would have continued their denuding action during the emergence of these islands, until at length, when the intervening channels were laid dry, and rivers began to flow,

* Vol. I. p. 409.

the deepening and widening of the valleys by rivers and land-flows would proceed in the same manner as in modern times in Calabria.*

Before a tract could be upraised to the height of several thousand feet above the level of the sea, the joint operation of running water and subterranean movements must greatly modify its physical geography; but when the action of the volcanic forces has been suspended, when a period of tranquillity succeeds, and the levels of the land remain fixed and stationary, the erosive power of water must soon be reduced to a state of comparative equilibrium. For this reason, a country that has been raised at a very remote period to a considerable height above the level of the sea may present nearly the same external configuration as one that has been more recently uplifted to the same height.

Migration of animals and plants.—The changes above described, which have been brought about by igneous and aqueous agency, cannot fail to strike the imagination, when we consider how recent in the calendar of nature is the epoch to which they are referred. But if we turn our thoughts to the organic world, we shall feel, perhaps, no less surprise at the great vicissitude which it has undergone during the same period.

We have seen that a large portion of Sicily has been converted from sea to land since the Mediterranean was peopled with the living species of testacea and zoophytes. The newly emerged surface, therefore, must, during this modern zoological epoch, have been inhabited for the first time by the terrestrial plants and animals which now abound in Sicily. It is fair to infer that the existing terrestrial species are, for the most part, of as high antiquity as the marine: and if this be the case, a large proportion of the plants and animals, now found in the tertiary districts in Sicily, must have inhabited the earth before the Newer Pliocene strata were raised above the waters. The plants of the flora of Sicily are common, almost without exception, to Italy or Africa, or some of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean; so that we may suppose the greater part of them to have migrated from pre-existing lands, just as the plants and animals of the Phlegræan fields have colonized Monte Nuovo, since that mountain was thrown up in the sixteenth century.†

We are brought, therefore, to admit the curious result, that the flora and fauna of the Val di Noto, and some other mountainous regions of Sicily, are of higher antiquity than the country itself, having not only flourished before the lands were raised from the deep, but even before they were deposited beneath the waters. Such conclusions throw a new light on the adaptation of the attributes and migratory habits of animals and

* Vol. I. p. 409.

† Professor Viviani of Genoa informed me, that, considering the great extent of Sicily, it was remarkable that its flora produced scarcely any, *if any peculiar indigenous species*; whereas there are several in Corsica, and some other Mediterranean islands.

plants, to the changes which are unceasingly in progress in the inanimate world. It is clear that the duration of species is so great, that they are destined to outlive many important revolutions in the physical geography of the earth; and hence those innumerable contrivances for enabling the subjects of the animal and vegetable creation to extend their range, the inhabitants of the land being often carried across the ocean, and the aquatic tribes over great continental spaces.* It is obviously expedient that the terrestrial and fluviatile species should not only be fitted for the rivers, valleys, plains, and mountains which exist at the era of their creation, but for others that are destined to be formed before the species shall become extinct; and, in like manner, the marine species are not only made for the deep and shallow regions of the ocean existing at the time when they are called into being, but for tracts that may be submerged or variously altered in depth during the time that is allotted for their continuance on the globe.

Recapitulation.—I may now briefly recapitulate some of the most striking results deduced from the investigation of a single district where the Newer Pliocene strata are largely developed.

In the first place, we have seen reason to infer that a stratified mass of solid limestone, attaining sometimes a thickness of eight hundred feet and upwards, has been gradually deposited at the bottom of the sea, the imbedded fossil shells and corallines being almost all of recent species; yet these fossils are frequently in the state of mere casts, so that in appearance they correspond very closely to organic remains found in limestones of very ancient date.

2dly. In some localities the limestone above mentioned alternates with volcanic rocks, such as have been formed by submarine eruptions, recurring again and again at distant intervals of time.

3dly. Argillaceous and sandy deposits have also been produced during the same period, and their accumulation has also been accompanied by submarine eruptions. Masses of mixed sedimentary and igneous origin, at least two thousand feet in thickness, can thus be shown to have accumulated since the sea was peopled with the greater number of the aquatic species now living.

4thly. These masses of submarine origin have, since their formation, been raised to the height of two thousand or three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and this elevation implies an extraordinary modification in the state of the earth's crust, at some unknown depth beneath the tract so upheaved.

5thly. This modification may possibly correspond with the effects of what is usually called "plutonic action," or the agency of volcanic and other causes at considerable depths; in which case, the Newer Pliocene plutonic rocks, formed beneath Sicily, must be of great extent.

* See Book III. chaps. v. vi. and vii.

6thly. Considerable inequalities must have been caused on the surface of the new raised lands during the emergence of the Newer Pliocene strata, by the action of tides, currents, and rivers, combined with the disturbing and dislocating force of the elevatory movements.

7thly. There are no features in the forms of the valleys and sea-cliffs thus recently produced which indicate the sudden rise of the strata to their present altitude, while there are some proofs of distinct and partial elevations at successive periods.

8thly. We may infer that the species of terrestrial and fluviatile animals and plants which now inhabit extensive districts, formed during the Newer Pliocene era, were in existence not only before the new strata were raised, but before their materials were brought together at the bottom of the sea.

CHAPTER X.

NEWER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS—MARINE AND VOLCANIC.

Tertiary formations of Campania—Comparison of the recorded changes in this region with those commemorated by geological monuments—Dikes of Somma—Parallelism of their opposite sides (p. 275.)—Age of the volcanic and associated rocks of Campania—Organic remains—No signs of diluvial waves—Marine Newer Pliocene strata chiefly seen in countries of earthquakes (p. 281.)—Illustrations from Chili—Peru—Parallel roads of Coquimbo—West Indies p. 284.)—East Indian archipelago—Red Sea.

Tertiary Formations of Campania.

Comparison of recorded changes with those commemorated by geological monuments.—In the second volume I traced the various changes which the volcanic region of Naples is known to have undergone during the last two thousand years; and, imperfect as are our historical records, the aggregate effect of igneous and aqueous agency, during that period, was shown to be far from insignificant. The rise of the modern cone of Vesuvius, since the year 79, was the most memorable event during those twenty centuries; but, in addition to this remarkable phenomenon, I enumerated the production of several new minor cones in Ischia, and of the Monte Nuovo, in the year 1538. The flowing also of lava currents upon the land and along the bottom of the sea was described,—the

showering down of volcanic sand, pumice, and scoriæ, in such abundance that whole cities were buried,—the filling up or shoaling of certain tracts of the sea, and the transportation of tufaceous sediment by rivers and land floods. I also explained the evidence in proof of a permanent alteration of the relative levels of the land and sea in several places, and of the same tract having, near Puzzuoli, been alternately upheaved and depressed to the amount of more than twenty feet. In connexion with these convulsions, I pointed out that, on the shores of the Bay of Baiæ, there are recent tufaceous strata filled with fabricated articles, mingled with marine shells. It was also shown that the sea has been making gradual advances upon the coast, not only sweeping away the soft tuffs of the Bay of Baiæ, but excavating precipitous cliffs, where the hard Ischian and Vesuvian lavas have flowed down into the deep.

These events, it may be objected, although interesting, are the results of operations on a very inferior scale to those indicated by geological monuments. When we examine this same region, it will be said we find that the ancient cone of Vesuvius, called Somma, is larger than the modern cone, and is intersected by a great number of dykes,—the hills of unknown antiquity, such as Astroni, the Solfatara, and Monte Barbaro, formed by separate eruptions, in different parts of the Phlegrean fields, far outnumber those of similar origin, which are recorded to have been thrown up within the historical era. In place of modern tuffs of slight thickness, and single flows of lava, we find, amongst the older formations, hills from 500 to more than two thousand feet in height, composed of an immense series of tufaceous strata, alternating with distinct lava currents. We have evidence that, in the lapse of past ages, districts, not merely a few miles square, were upraised to the height of twenty or thirty feet above their former level, but that extensive and mountainous countries were uplifted to an elevation of more than 1000 feet, and at some points more than 2000 feet, above the level of the sea.

These and similar objections are made by those who compare the modern effects of igneous and aqueous causes, not with a part, but with the whole results of the same agency in antecedent ages. Thus viewed in the aggregate, the leading geological features of each district must always appear to be on a colossal scale, just as a large edifice may seem an effort of super-human power, until we reflect on the innumerable minute parts of which it is composed, the number of the builders, and the time required to raise it. A mountain mass, so long as the imagination is occupied in contemplating the gigantic whole, must appear the work of extraordinary causes; but when the separate portions of which it is made up are carefully studied, they are seen to have been formed successively; and the dimensions of each part, considered singly, are soon recognised to be comparatively insignificant, so that it appears no longer extravagant to liken them to the recorded effects of ordinary causes.

Difference in the composition of Somma and Vesuvius.

As no traditional accounts have been handed down to us of the eruptions of the ancient Vesuvius, from the times of the earliest Greek colonists, the volcano must have been dormant for many centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, previous to the great eruption in the reign of Titus. But it will be shown hereafter that there are sufficient grounds for presuming this mountain, and the other igneous products of Campania, to have been produced during the Newer Pliocene period.

We have seen that the ancient and modern cones of Vesuvius were each a counterpart of the other in structure* ; and I may now remark that the principal point of difference consists in the greater abundance in the older cone of fragments of altered sedimentary rocks ejected during eruptions. We may easily conceive that the first explosions would act with the greatest violence, rendering and shattering whatever solid masses obstructed the escape of lava and the accompanying gases, so that great heaps of ejected pieces of rock would naturally occur in the tufaceous breccias formed by the earliest eruptions. But when a passage had once been opened and an habitual vent established, the materials thrown out would consist of liquid lava, which would take the form of sand and scorïæ, or of angular fragments of such solid lavas as may have choked up the vent.

Among the fragments which abound in the tufaceous breccias of Somma, none are more common than a saccharoid dolomite, supposed to have been derived from an ordinary limestone altered by heat and volcanic vapours.

Carbonate of lime enters into the composition of so many of the simple minerals found in Somma, that M. Mitscherlich, with much probability, ascribes their great variety to the action of the volcanic heat on subjacent masses of limestone.

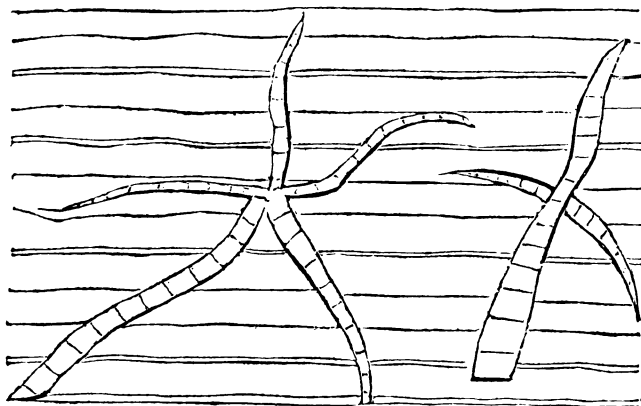
Dikes of Somma.—The dikes seen in the great escarpment which Somma presents towards the modern cone of Vesuvius are very numerous. They are for the most part vertical, and traverse at right angles the beds of lava, scorïæ, volcanic breccia, and sand, of which the ancient cone is composed. They project in relief several inches, or sometimes feet, from the face of the cliff, like the dikes of Etna already described (see Fig. 102.), being, like them, extremely compact, and less destructible than the intersected tuffs and porous lavas. In vertical extent they vary from a few yards to 500 feet, and in breadth from one to twelve feet. Many of them cut all the inclined beds in the escarpment of Somma from top to bottom, others stop short before they ascend above half way, and a few terminate

* Vol. I. p. 318.

at both ends, either in a point or abruptly. In mineral composition they scarcely differ from the lavas of Somma, the rock consisting of a base of leucite and augite through which large crystals of augite and some of leucite are scattered.* Examples are not rare of one dike cutting through another, and in one instance a shift or fault is seen at the point of intersection. I observed before, when speaking of the dikes of the modern cone of Vesuvius, that they must have been produced by the filling up of open fissures by liquid lava.† In some examples, however, the rents seem to have been filled laterally.

The reader will remember the description before given of the manner in which the plain of Jerocarne, in Calabria, was fissured by the earthquake of 1783, so that the academicians compared it to the cracks in a broken pane of glass.‡ If we suppose the side walls of the ancient crater

Fig. 109.

*Dikes or veins at the Punto del Nasone on Somma.*

of Vesuvius to have been cracked in like manner, and the lava to have entered the rents and become consolidated, we can explain the singular form of the veins figured in the accompanying wood-cut.§

Parallelism of their opposite sides.—Nothing is more remarkable than the parallelism of the opposite sides of the dikes, which usually correspond with as much regularity as the two opposite faces of a wall of masonry. This character appears at first the more inexplicable, when we consider how jagged and uneven are the rents caused by earthquakes in masses of heterogeneous composition like those composing the cone of Somma; but M. Necker has offered an ingenious and, I think, satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. He refers us to Sir W. Hamilton's account of an eruption of Vesuvius in the year 1779, who records the

* Consult the valuable memoir of M. L. A. Necker, *Mém. de la Soc. de Phys. et d'Hist. Nat de Genève*, tome ii. part i., Nov. 1822.

† Vol. I. p. 318.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 400, Fig. 47.

§ From a drawing of M. Necker, in *Mém.* before cited.

following facts :—"The lavas, when they either boiled over the crater, or broke out from the conical parts of the volcano, constantly formed channels as regular as if they had been cut by art, down the steep part of the mountain ; and, whilst in a state of perfect fusion, continued their course in those channels, which were sometimes full to the brim, and at other times more or less so, according to the quantity of matter in motion.

"These channels, upon examination after an eruption, I have found to be in general from two to five or six feet wide, and seven or eight feet deep. They were often hid from the sight by a quantity of scorix that had formed a crust over them ; and the lava, having been conveyed in a covered way for some yards, came out fresh again into an open channel. After an eruption I have walked in some of those subterraneous or covered galleries, which were exceedingly curious, the sides, top, and bottom *being worn perfectly smooth and even* in most parts, by the violence of the currents of the red-hot lavas, which they had conveyed for many weeks successively."

In another place, in the same memoir, he describes the liquid and red-hot matter as being received "into a regular channel, raised upon a sort of wall of scorix and cinders, almost perpendicularly, of about the height of eight or ten feet, resembling much an ancient aqueduct."*

Now, if the lava in these instances had not run out from the covered channel, in consequence of the declivity whereon it was placed—if, instead of the space being left empty, the lava had been retained within until it cooled and consolidated, it would then have constituted a small dike with parallel sides. But the walls of a vertical fissure through which lava has ascended in its way to a volcanic vent must have been exposed to the same erosion as the four sides of the channels before adverted to. The prolonged and uniform friction of the heavy fluid, as it is forced and made to flow upwards, cannot fail to wear and smooth down the surfaces on which it rubs, and the intense heat must melt all such masses as project and obstruct the passage of the incandescent fluid.

I do not mean to assert that the sides of fissures caused by earthquakes are never smooth and parallel, but they are usually uneven, and are often seen to have been so where volcanic or *trap* dikes are as regular in shape as those of Somma. The solution, therefore, of this problem, in reference to the modern dikes, is most interesting, as being of very general application in geology.

Varieties in their texture.—Having explained the origin of the parallelism of the sides of a dike, we have next to consider the difference of its texture at the edges and in the middle. Towards the centre, observes M. Necker, the rock is larger grained, the component elements being in a far more crystalline state ; while at the edge the lava is sometimes vitreous,

* Phil. Trans., vol. lxx. 1780.

and always finer grained. A thin parting band, approaching in its character to pitchstone, occasionally intervenes on the contact of the vertical dike and intersected beds. M. Necker mentions one of these at the place called Primo Monte, in the Atrio del Cavallo ; I saw three or four others in different parts of the great escarpment. These phenomena are in perfect harmony with the results of the experiments of Sir James Hall and Mr. Gregory Watt, which have shown that a glassy texture is the effect of sudden cooling, and that, on the contrary, a crystalline grain is produced where fused minerals are allowed to consolidate slowly and tranquilly under high pressure.

It is evident that the central portion of the lava in a fissure would, during consolidation, part with its heat more slowly than the sides, although the contrast of circumstances would not be so great as when we compare the lava at the bottom and at the surface of a current flowing in the open air. In this case the uppermost part, where it has been in contact with the atmosphere, and where refrigeration has been most rapid, is always found to consist of scoriform, vitreous, and porous lava, while at a greater depth the mass assumes a more lithoidal structure, and then becomes more and more stony as we descend, until at length we are able to recognise with a magnifying glass the simple minerals of which the rock is composed. On penetrating still deeper, we can detect the constituent parts by the naked eye, and in the Vesuvian currents distinct crystals of augite and leucite become apparent.

The same phenomenon, observes M. Necker, may readily be exhibited on a smaller scale, if we detach a piece of liquid lava from a moving current. The fragment cools instantly, and we find the surface covered with a vitreous coat, while the interior, although extremely fine grained, has a more stony appearance.

It must, however, be observed, that although the lateral portions of the dikes are finer grained than the central, yet the vitreous parting layer before alluded to is extremely rare. This may, perhaps, be accounted for, as the above-mentioned author suggests, by the great heat which the walls of a fissure may acquire before the fluid mass begins to consolidate, in which case the lava, even at the sides, would cool very slowly. Some fissures, also, may be filled from above ; and in this case the refrigeration at the sides would be more rapid than when the melted matter flowed upwards from the volcanic foci, in an intensely heated state.

The rock composing the dikes of Somma is far more compact than that of ordinary lava, for the pressure of a column of melted matter in a fissure greatly exceeds that in an ordinary stream of lava ; and pressure checks the expansion of those gases which give rise to vesicles in lava.

There is a tendency in almost all the Vesuvian dikes to divide into horizontal prisms,* a phenomenon in accordance with the formation of

* See Fig. 109, ante, p. 275.

vertical columns in horizontal beds of lava ; for in both cases the divisions which give rise to the prismatic structure are at right angles to the cooling surfaces.

Minor cones of the Phlegræan Fields.—In the volcanic district of Naples there are a great number of conical hills with craters on their summits, which have evidently been produced by one or more explosions, like that which threw up the Monte Nuovo in 1538. They are composed of trachytic tuff, which is loose and incoherent, both in the hills and, to a certain depth, in the plains around their base, but which is indurated below. It is suggested by Mr. Scrope, that this difference may be owing to the circumstance of the volcanic vents having burst out in a shallow sea, as was the case with Monte Nuovo, where there is a similar foundation of hard tuff, under a covering of loose lapilli. The subaqueous part may have become solid by an aggregative process like that which takes place in the setting of mortar, while the rest of the ejections, having accumulated on dry land when the cone was raised above the water, may have remained in a loose state.*

Age of the volcanic and associated rocks of Campania.—If we inquire into the evidence derivable from organic remains, respecting the age of the volcanic rocks of Campania, we find reason to conclude that such parts as do not belong to the Recent are referable to the Newer Pliocene period. In the solid tuff quarried out of the hills immediately behind Naples, are found recent shells of the genera *Ostrea*, *Cardium*, *Buccinum*, and *Patella*, all referable to species now living in the Mediterranean.† In the centre of Ischia the lofty hill called Epomeo, or San Nicola, is composed of greenish indurated tuff of a prodigious thickness, interstratified in some parts with argillaceous marl, and here and there with great streams of indurated lava. Visconti ascertained by trigonometrical measurement that this mountain was 2605 feet above the level of the sea. In mineral composition and in form, as seen from many points of view, it resembles the hill to the north of Naples, on the summit of which stands the convent of Camaldoli, which is 1643 feet in height. I collected in 1828 many recent marine shells from beds of clay and tuff, not far from the summit of Epomeo, about 2000 feet above the level of the sea, as also at another place, about 100 feet below the first, on the southern declivity of the mountain, and others still lower, not far above the town of Moropano. At Casamicciol, and several places near the sea-shore, shells have long been observed in stratified tuff and clay. From these various points I obtained, during a short excursion in Ischia, twenty-eight species of shells, all of which, with one exception, were identified by M. Deshayes with recent species.‡

* Geol. Trans. vol. ii. part iii. p. 351. Second series.

† Scrope, *ibid.*

‡ See the list of these shells, Appendix II. first ed.

It is clear, therefore, that the great mass of Epomeo was not only raised to its present height above the level of the sea, but was also *formed*, since the Mediterranean was inhabited by the existing species of testacea.

In the Ischian tuffs we find pumice, lapilli, angular fragments of trachytic lava, and other products of igneous ejections, interstratified with some deposits of clay free from any intermixture of volcanic matter. These clays might have resulted from the decomposition of felspathic lava like that so abundant in Ischia, the materials having been transported by rivers and marine currents, and spread over the bottom of the sea where testacea were living. All these submarine tuffs, lavas, and clays of Campania, very much resemble those around the base of Etna, and in parts of the Val di Noto before described.

External configuration of the country, how caused.—When once we have satisfied ourselves by inspection of the marine shells imbedded in tuffs at high elevations, that a mass of land like the island of Ischia has been raised from beneath the waters of the sea to its present height, we are prepared to find signs of the denuding action of the waves impressed upon the outward form of the island, especially if we conceive the upheaving force to have acted by successive movements. Let us suppose the low contiguous island of Procida to be raised by degrees until it attains the height of Ischia; we should in that case expect the steep cliffs which now face Misenum to be carried upwards, and to become precipices near the summit of the central mountain. Such, perhaps, may have been the origin of those precipices which appear on the north and south sides of the ridge which forms the summit of Epomeo in Ischia. The northern escarpment is about 1000 feet in height, rising from the hollow called the Cavo delle Neve, above the village of Panella. The abrupt manner in which the horizontal tuffs are there cut off, in the face of the cliff, is such as the action of the sea, working on soft materials, might easily have produced, undermining and removing a great portion of the mass. A heap of shingle which lies at the base of a steep declivity on the flanks of Epomea, between the Cavo delle Neve and Panella, may once, perhaps, have been a sea-beach, for it certainly could not have been brought to the spot by any existing torrents.

There is no difficulty in conceiving that if a large tract of the bed of the sea near Ischia should now be gradually upheaved during the continuance of volcanic agency, this newly raised land might present a counterpart to the Phlegræan Fields before described. Masses of alternating lava and tuff, the products of submarine eruptions, might on their emergence become hills and islands; the level intervening plains might afterwards appear, covered partly by the ashes drifted and deposited by water, and partly by those which would fall after the laying dry of the tract. The last features imparted to the physical geography would be derived from such eruptions in the open air as those of Monte Nuovo and the minor cones of Ischia.

No signs of diluvial waves.—Such a conversion of a large tract of sea into land might possibly take place while the surface of the contiguous country underwent but slight modification. No great wave was caused by the permanent rise of the coast near Puzzuoli in the year 1538, because the upheaving operation appears to have been effected by a succession of minor shocks.* A series of such movements, therefore, might produce an island like Ischia without throwing a diluvial rush of waters upon low parts of the neighbouring continent. The advocates of paroxysmal elevations may, perhaps, contend that the rise of Ischia must have been anterior to the birth of all the cones of loose scoriæ scattered over the Phlegræan Fields; for according to them, the sudden rise of marine strata causes inundations which devastate adjoining continents. But the absence of any signs of such floods in the volcanic region of Campania does not appear to me to warrant the conclusion, either that Ischia was raised previously to the production of the volcanic cones, or that it may not have been rising during the whole period of their formation.

We learn from the study of the mutations now in progress, that one part of the earth's surface may, for an indefinite period, be the scene of continued change, while another, in the immediate vicinity, remains stationary. We need go no farther than our own country to illustrate this principle; for, reasoning from what has taken place in the last ten centuries, we must anticipate that, in the course of the next four thousand or five thousand years, a long strip of land, skirting the line of our eastern coast, will be devoured by the ocean, while part of the interior, immediately adjacent, will remain at rest and entirely undisturbed. The analogy holds true in regions where the volcanic fires are at work; for part of the Philosopher's Tower on Etna has stood for the last two thousand years, at the height of more than nine thousand feet above the sea, between the foot of the highest cone and the edge of the precipice which overhangs the Val del Bove, whilst large tracts of the surrounding district have been the scenes of tremendous convulsions. The great cone above has more than once been destroyed, and again renewed; the earth has sunk down in the neighbouring Cisterna;† the cones of 1811 and 1819 have been thrown up, on the ledge of rock below, pouring out of their craters two copious streams of lava; the watery deluge of 1755, descending from the desert region into the Val del Bove, has rolled vast heaps of rocky fragments towards the sea; fissures, several miles in length, have opened on the flanks of Etna; towns and villages have been laid in ruins by earthquakes, or buried under lava and ashes;—yet the tower has stood, as if placed there to commemorate the stability of one part of the earth's surface, while others in immediate proximity have been subject to most wonderful vicissitudes.

* See Vol. I. p. 426.

† See ante, p. 259.

In concluding what I have to say of the marine and volcanic formations of the Newer Pliocene period, I may notice the highly interesting fact, that the marine strata of this era have been found at great elevations, chiefly in those countries where earthquakes have occurred during the historical ages. On the other hand, it is a still more striking fact, that there is no example of any extensive maritime district, now habitually agitated by violent earthquakes, which has not, when carefully investigated, yielded traces of marine strata, either of Recent or Newer Pliocene eras, at a considerable height above the sea.

Chili—Conception Bay.—In illustration of the above remarks, I may mention that on the western coasts of South America marine deposits occur, containing precisely the same shells as are now living in the Pacific. In Chili, for example, as before stated, micaceous sand, containing the fossil remains of such species as now inhabit the Bay of Conception, are found at the height of from 1000 to 1500 feet above the level of the ocean.* It is impossible to say how much of this rise may have taken place during the *Recent* period. One earthquake appears to have raised this part of the Chilian coast, in 1750, to the height of at least twenty-five feet above its former level. If we could suppose a series of such shocks to occur, one in every century, only 6000 years would be required to uplift the coast 1500 feet. But we have no data for inferring that so great a quantity of elevation has taken place in that space of time; and although there is no evidence that the micaceous sand may not belong to the Recent period, I think it more probable that it was deposited during the Newer Pliocene period.

Peru.—I have been informed by Mr. A. Cruickshanks, a naturalist who resided for several years in South America, that in the valley of Lima, or Rimao, where the subterranean movements have been so violent in recent times, there are indications not only of a considerable rise of the land, but of that rise having resulted from *successive* movements. Distinct lines of ancient sea-cliffs have been observed at various heights, at the base of which the hard rocks of greenstone are hollowed out into precisely those forms which they now assume between high and low water mark on the shores of the Pacific. Immediately below these water-worn lines are ancient beaches strewed with rounded blocks. One of these cliffs appears in the hill behind Banos del Pujio, about seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, and two hundred above the contiguous valley. Another occurs at Amancaes, at the height of perhaps two hundred feet above the sea; and others at intermediate elevations.

Mr. Freyer also states that the Isle of San Lorenzo, in the Bay of Callao, appears to have been raised up by volcanic action, and partially so at a comparatively recent period; for he found at considerable heights

* Vol. I. p. 420.

above the sea the shells of *Concholepas*, *Pecten purpureus*, *Sigaretus concavus*, and others, in great abundance, retaining their colours almost as fresh as those now living in the Pacific.*

Parallel Roads of Coquimbo.—We can hardly doubt that the parallel roads of Coquimbo, in Chili, described by Captain Hall, owe their origin to similar causes. These roads, or shelves, occur in a valley six or seven miles wide, which descends from the Andes to the Pacific. Their general width is from twenty to fifty yards, but they are, at some places, half a mile broad. They are so disposed as to present exact counterparts of one another, at the same level, on opposite sides of the valley. There are three distinctly characterized sets; the upper one lies about three or four hundred feet above the level of the sea; the next twenty yards lower; and the lowest about ten yards still lower. Each resembles a shingle beach, being formed entirely of loose materials, principally water-worn rounded stones, from the size of a nut to that of a man's head. The stones are principally granite and gneiss, with masses of schistus, whinstone, and quartz, mixed indiscriminately, and all bearing marks of having been worn by attrition under water.†

The theory proposed by Captain Hall to explain these appearances is the same as that which had been adopted to account for the analogous parallel roads of Glen Roy in Scotland.‡ The valley is supposed to have been a lake, the waters of which stood, originally, at the level of the highest road, until a flat beach was produced. A portion of the barrier was then broken down, which allowed the lake to discharge part of its waters into the sea, and, consequently, to fall to the second level; and so on successively till the whole embankment was washed away, and the valley left as we now see it.

As I did not feel satisfied with this explanation, I applied to my friend Captain Hall for additional details, and he immediately sent me his original manuscript notes, requesting me to make free use of them. In them I find the following interesting passages, omitted in his printed account:—“The valley is completely open towards the sea; if the roads, therefore, are the beaches of an ancient lake, it is difficult to imagine a catastrophe sufficiently violent to carry away the barrier, which should not at the same time obliterate all traces of the beaches. I find it difficult also to account for the water-worn character of all the stones, for they have the appearance of having travelled over a great distance, being well rounded and dressed. They are in immense quantity too, and much more than one could expect to find on the beach of any lake, and *seem more properly to belong to the ocean.*”

* Proceedings of Geol. Soc., No. 40, p. 179.

† Captain Hall's South America, vol. ii. p. 9.

‡ See Sir T. D. Lauder, Ed. Roy. Soc. Trans., vol. ix.; and Dr. MacCulloch, Geol. Trans., 1st Series, vol. iv. p. 314.

I had entertained a strong suspicion, before reading these notes, that the beaches were formed by the waves of the Pacific, and not by the waters of a lake; in other words, that they bear testimony to the successive rise of the land, not to the repeated fall of the waters of a lake. M. Boblaye has discovered four or five distinct ranges of ancient sea-cliffs, one above the other, at various heights, in the Morea, which attest that that country has been upheaved at as many successive periods. He found inland terraces or beaches, covered with shells, at the base of precipices worn like the modern sea-cliffs by the waves, and having, like them, many caverns and lithodamous perforations in the hard limestone.*

Near the northern gate of the town of St. Mihiel, south of Verdun, in France, I have examined a series of markings on the face of the limestone cliffs, much resembling some of those described by M. Boblaye. There are three and sometimes four distinct horizontal grooves, which have been scooped out of a white semi-crystalline rock, or marble, of the oolitic period. This ancient cliff, which is near the right bank of the Meuse, is in part broken into a number of detached rocks, the upper parts of which present in some cases precipitous sides towards all points of the compass, round which the grooves pass in a circular course, just as if the summit of a rocky islet had been worn by the waves.†

Captain Bayfield, in his survey of the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, traced in several places, especially in the Mingan Islands, a succession of shingle beaches, the most distant from the shore being sixty feet above the level of the highest tides. He also observed water-worn pillars of limestone accompanying these beaches, which bear evidence of having been worn and scooped out at different periods; the marks of the successive action of the water agreeing in level with the successive ridges of limestone shingle. The drawings of the pillars, made to illustrate his memoir, convince me that they are counterparts of the worn rocks which I have seen at St. Mihiel.‡ I have also been favoured with other views of rocks on the same coast, drawn by Lieut. A. Bowen, R. N. (see Fig. 110. p. 284.)

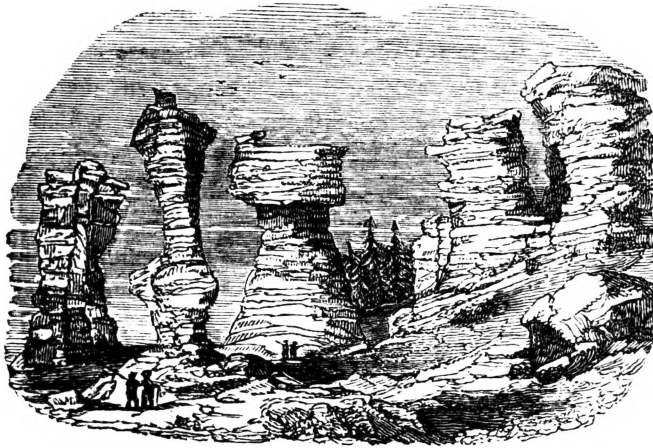
If there exist lines of parallel upraised cliffs, we ought to find parallel lines of elevated beaches on those coasts where the rocks are of a nature

* Journ. de Géol., No. x. Feb. 1831; Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. ii. p. 236.

† I have no data for speculating on the period at which these cliffs may have emerged from the sea. I was directed to the spot, which I visited in June, 1833, by M. Deshayes; and I stated in the second edition, on his authority, that the worn rocks were eaten into by marine lithodamous shells, but I was unable to discover any of these; and I believe that the fossils of the genus *Saxicava*, which M. Deshayes procured from this place, were of the age of the corals of the limestone, not of the date of the excavation of the grooves. The fossil corals of this formation (coral rag) frequently contain lithodamous shells, which seem to have pierced the zoophytes while they were still growing in the sea.

‡ Proceedings of Geol. Soc., No. 33, p. 5.

Fig. 110.



Limestone columns in Niapisca Island, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Height of the second column on the left, 60 feet.

to retain for a length of time the marks imprinted on their surface. We may expect such indications to be peculiarly manifest in countries where the subterranean force has been in activity within comparatively modern times, and it is there that the hypothesis of paroxysmal elevations, and the instantaneous rise of mountain-chains, should first have been put to the test, before it was too hastily embraced and extended.

West Indian Archipelago.—According to the sketch given by Maclure of the geology of the Leeward Islands, the western range consists in great part of formations of the most modern period.* It will be remembered, that many parts of this region have been subject to violent earthquakes; that in St. Vincent's and Guadeloupe there are active volcanos, and in some of the other islands boiling springs and solfataras. In St. Eustatia there is a marine deposit, estimated at 1500 feet in thickness, consisting of coral limestone alternating with beds of shells, of which the species are, according to Maclure, the same as those now found in the sea. These strata dip to the south-west, at an angle of about 45° , and both rest upon, and are covered by cinders, pumice and volcanic substances. Part of the madreporic rock has been converted into silex and calcedony, and is, in some parts, associated with crystalline gypsum. Alternations of coral-line formations with prismatic lava and different volcanic substances also occur in Dominica and St. Christopher's; and the American naturalist remarks, that as every lava-current which runs into the sea in this archipelago is liable to be covered with corals and shells, and these again with lava, we may suppose an indefinite repetition of such alternations to constitute the foundation of each island.

* Quart. Journ. of Sci., vol. v. p. 311.

I do not question the accuracy of the opinion, that the fossil shells and corals of these formations are of recent species; for there are specimens of limestone in the Museum of the Jardin du Roi at Paris, from the West Indies, in which the imbedded shells are all or nearly all identical with those now living. Part of this limestone is soft, but some of the specimens are very compact and crystalline, and contain only the casts of shells. Of thirty species examined by M. Deshayes from this rock, twenty-eight were decidedly recent.

Honduras.—Shells sent from some of the recent strata of Jamaica, and many from the nearest adjoining continent of the Honduras, may be seen in the British Museum, and are identified with species now living in the West Indian seas.

East Indian Archipelago.—We have seen that the Indian Ocean is one of the principal theatres of volcanic disturbance; it is to be expected, therefore, that future researches in this quarter of the globe will bring to light some of the most striking examples of marine strata upraised to great heights during comparatively modern periods.

From the observations of Dr. Jack, it appears that in the island of Pulo Nias, off the west coast of Sumatra, masses of corals of recent species can be traced from the level of the sea far into the interior, where they form considerable hills. Large shells of the *Chama gigas* (*Tridacna* Lamk.) are scattered over the face of the country, just as they occur on the present reefs. These fossils are in such a state of preservation as to be collected by the inhabitants for the purpose of being cut into rings for the arms and wrists.*

Madeira.—The island of Madeira is placed between the Azores and Canaries, in both of which groups there are active volcanos; and Madeira itself was violently shaken by earthquakes during the last century. It consists in great part of volcanic tuffs and porous lava, intersected in some places, as at the Brazen Head, by vertical dykes of compact lava.† Some of the marine fossil shells, procured by Mr. Bowdich from this island, are referable to recent species.

These examples may suffice for the present, and lead us to anticipate with confidence, that in almost all countries where changes of level have taken place in our own times, the geologist will find monuments of a prolonged series of convulsions during the Recent and Newer Pliocene periods. Exceptions may no doubt occur where a particular line of coast is sinking down; yet even here we may presume, from what we know of the irregular action of the subterranean forces, that some cases of partial elevation will have been caused by occasional oscillations of level, so that modern subaqueous formations will, here and there, have been brought up to view.

* Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. i. part ii. p. 397.

† MS. of Captain B. Hall.

I shall conclude by enumerating some exceptions to the rule above illustrated,—instances of elevation where no great earthquakes have been recently experienced.

Scandinavia.—The first and most important is that of Sweden, before described.* This country, although free from convulsions, was shown to be the theatre of unceasing changes in the relative level of land and sea. We accordingly discover in it deposits of sand, marl, and clay, several hundred feet in thickness, and containing recent species of marine shells raised to the height of 200 feet, and even in Norway 400 feet above the sea, and extending at some points far into the interior.

Grosœil, near Nice.—At a spot called Grosœil, near Nice, east of the Bay of Villefranche, in the peninsula of St. Hospice, a remarkable bed of fine sand occurs at an elevation of about fifty feet above the sea.† This sand rests on inclined secondary rocks, and is filled with the remains of marine species, all identical with those now inhabiting the neighbouring sea. No less than two hundred species of shells, and several crustacea and echini, have been obtained by M. Risso, in a high state of preservation, although mingled with broken shells. The winds have blown up large heaps of similar sand to considerable heights, upon ledges of the steep coast farther westward; but the position of the deposit at Grosœil cannot be referred to such agency, for among the shells may be seen the large *Murex Triton*, Linn., and a species of *Cassis*, weighing a pound and a-half.

West of England.—The proofs lately brought to light of analogous elevations of deposits containing recent shells on our western shores, and between Lancashire and the Bristol channel, have been already pointed out.‡

Western borders of the Red Sea.—Another exception may be alluded to, for which we are indebted to the researches of Mr. James Burton. On the western shores of the Arabian Gulf, about half way between Suez and Kosire, in the 28th degree of north latitude, a formation of white limestone and calcareous sand is seen, reaching the height of 200 feet above the sea. It is replete with fossil shells, all of recent species, which are in a beautiful state of preservation, many of them retaining their colour.§ The volcano of Gabel Tor, situate at the entrance of the Arabian Gulf, is the nearest volcanic region known to me at present.

But the reader must not infer, from the facts above detailed, that marine strata of the Newer Pliocene period have been produced almost exclusively

* Book II. ch. xvii.

† I examined this spot, with Mr. Murchison, in 1828.

‡ See description of the Map, Vol. I. p. 141.

§ These fossils are now in Mr. Greenough's museum in London, and duplicates, presented by him, in the cabinets of the Geological Society. A list was given in App. II., first edition.

in countries of earthquakes, or where changes of level are known to be taking place, as in Sweden. If our illustrations have been drawn chiefly from modern volcanic regions, it is simply because these formations have been made visible in those districts only where the conversion of sea into land has occurred in times comparatively modern. Other continents have, during the Newer Pliocene period, suffered degradation, and rivers and currents have deposited sediment in other seas ; but the new strata remain concealed wherever no subsequent alterations of level have taken place.

Yet, to a certain limited extent, the growth of new subaqueous deposits may have been greatest where aqueous causes have co-operated with earthquakes. It is there that the degradation of land is most rapid, and it is there only that materials ejected from below, by volcanic explosions, are added to the sediment transported by running water.*

CHAPTER XI.

NEWER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS—FRESHWATER AND ALLUVIAL.

Newer Pliocene freshwater formations—Valley of the Elsa—Travertins of Rome—Loess of the Valley of the Rhine—Contains recent terrestrial and aquatic shells—Its origin—Osseous breccias of the Newer Pliocene era (p. 294.)—Fossil bones of Marsupial animals in Australian caves—Newer Pliocene alluviums (p. 297.)—European alluviums chiefly tertiary—Erratic blocks of the Alps—Theory of their transportation by ice.

Freshwater Formations.—IN this chapter I shall treat of the freshwater formations, and of the cave breccias and alluviums of the Newer Pliocene period.

In regard to the first of these, they must have been formed, in greater or less quantity, in nearly all the existing lakes of the world ; in those, at least, of which the basins were formed before the earth was tenanted by man. If the great lakes of North America originated before that era, the sedimentary strata deposited therein, in the ages immediately antecedent, would, according to the terms of our definition, belong to the Newer Pliocene period.

Valley of the Elsa.—As an example of the strata of this age, which have been exposed to view in consequence of the drainage of a lake, I may mention those of the valley of the Elsa, in Tuscany, between Florence and Sienna, where we meet with freshwater marls and travertins

* See Book II. chap. xv. ; and Book III. chap. xviii.

full of shells, belonging to species which now live in the lakes and rivers of Italy. Valleys several hundred feet deep have been excavated through the lacustrine beds, and the ancient town of Colle stands on a hill composed of them. The subjacent formation consists of marine Subapennine beds, in which more than half the shells are of recent species. The freshwater shells which I collected near Colle are in a very perfect state, and the colours of the *Neritinæ* are peculiarly brilliant.*

Travertins of Rome.—Many of the travertins and calcareous tufas which cap the hills of Rome may also belong to the same period. The terrestrial shells inclosed in these masses are of the same species as those now abounding in the gardens of Rome, and the accompanying aquatic shells are such as are found in the streams and lakes of the Campagna. On Mount Aventine, the Vatican, and the Capitol, we find abundance of vegetable matter, principally reeds, incrustated with calcareous tufa, and intermixed with volcanic sand and pumice. The tusk of a mammoth has been procured from this formation, filled in the interior with solid travertine, wherein sparkling crystals of augite are interspersed, so that the bone has all the appearance of having been extracted from a hard crystalline rock.†

These Roman tufas and travertins repose partly on marine tertiary strata, belonging, perhaps, to the Older Pliocene era, and partly on volcanic tuff of a still later date. They must have been formed in small lakes and marshes, which existed before the excavation of the valleys which divide the seven hills of Rome, and they must originally have occupied the lowest hollows of the country as it then existed; whereas now we find them placed upon the summit of hills about 200 feet above the alluvial plain of the Tiber. We know that this river has flowed nearly in its present channel ever since the building of Rome, and that scarcely any changes in the geographical features of the country have taken place since that era.

When the marine tertiary strata of this district were formed, those of Monte Mario for example, the Mediterranean was already inhabited by a large proportion of the existing species of testacea. At a subsequent period, volcanic eruptions occurred, and tuffs were superimposed. The marine formation then emerged from the deep, and supported lakes wherein the freshwater groups above described slowly accumulated, at a time when the mammoth inhabited the country. The valley of the Tiber was afterwards excavated, and the adjoining hills assumed their present shape; and then a long interval may, perhaps, have elapsed before the first human settlers arrived. Thus we have evidence of a chain of events,

* The following six species, all of which now inhabit Italy, were identified by M. Deshayes:—*Paludina impura*, *Neritina fluviatilis*, *Succinea amphibia*, *Limnea auricularis*, *L. peregra*, and *Planorbis carinatus*.

† This fossil was shown me by Signor Riccioli at Rome.

all regarded by the geologist as among the most recent, but which, nevertheless, may have preceded, for a long series of ages, a very remote era in the history of nations.

*Loess of the valley of the Rhine.**—A remarkable deposit of ancient silt, containing land and freshwater shells of living European species, occurs, here and there, throughout the valley of the Rhine, from the plains below Cologne up to the borders of Switzerland, near Schaffhausen, and in the valleys of the principal tributaries of the Rhine. This deposit of yellow calcareous loam is provincially termed “loess” by the Germans, and in Alsace “lehm,” and it partakes partly of an alluvial and partly of a lacustrine character. It exhibits almost every where the same mineralogical characters and fossil shells, and is usually found in detached patches, but sometimes forming lines of low hills which rest on the gravel of the alluvial plain of the Rhine. Occasionally it reposes on the flanks of the mountains bounding the great valley, where it rises to various elevations above the river, sometimes to 300 or 400 feet, as near Basle, where it is more than 1200 feet above the sea.

In an excursion through part of the Duchy of Darmstadt by Mayence, Oppenheim, Alzey, Flonheim, Eppelsheim, and Worms, I found the loess spread almost every where over the country. On the opposite side of the Rhine, in the elevated table land above the Bergstrasse between Wiesloch and Bruchsal, I observed it attaining a thickness of 200 feet. It extends also far into Wurtemberg, up the valley of the Neckar, and from Frankfort, up the valley of the Mayne, to above Dettelbach. Near Strasburg large masses of it are seen at the foot of the Vosges mountains, on the left of the great plain of the Rhine, and at the base of the mountains of the Black Forest on the other side. It occurs not only at Basle, as above stated, but still higher up the Rhine at Waldshut, and it is said to terminate between that place and Schaffhausen. It is important to remark that all the above-mentioned places, however distant from each other, have a direct hydrographical communication with the main valley of the Rhine.

When the loess is first observed lying on the gravel of the great plain near Bonn, Heidelberg, Strasburg, and other places, we naturally suppose it to be of very modern origin, especially as it contains recent land and freshwater shells of species which are, for the most part, very abundant in the adjacent country. Even the colour of some of these shells, as that of the *Helix nemoralis*, is occasionally preserved. But, when we have extended our investigations, we find that although the present system

* Having re-examined a much greater extent of the country covered by the loess in the years 1833 and 1835, I have modified and retracted some opinions which I expressed in regard to it in former editions. For a full account of my observations see Jameson's Ed. New Phil. Journ., No. 33. July 1834; Proceedings of Geol. Soc., No. 36, p. 83, and No. 43, p. 221; and Anniv. Address to Geol. Soc. 1836.

of hills and valleys must have existed previously to the formation of the loess, yet the whole country has undergone many great geographical changes during the accumulation of the deposit—so great, indeed, that there has probably been a sinking down to the amount of many hundred feet, and afterwards a re-elevation of all the land between Switzerland and Holland since this silt began to accumulate. No changes of less magnitude seem adequate to explain the phenomena about to be described.

The loess at Heidelberg, according to M. Leonhard, consists chiefly of argillaceous matter, combined with a sixth part of carbonate of lime, and a sixth of quartzose and micaceous sand. It is a pulverulent loam, of a dirty yellowish-gray colour, often containing calcareous sandy concretions or nodules, rarely exceeding the size of a man's head. Its entire thickness, in some places, amounts to between 200 and 300 feet; yet there are often no signs of stratification in the mass, except here and there at the bottom, where there is occasionally a slight intermixture of drifted materials derived from subjacent rocks.

As the pure loess exhibits no division into strata, I at first imagined, in common with other observers, that this deposit was thrown down suddenly from the muddy waters of a transient flood, in the same manner as the moya of the Andes, or as the trass of the Rhine volcanos is generally believed to have been formed. But on re-examining the places where loess and alluvium, or loess and layers of volcanic matter, alternate, I am compelled to renounce this view. In the deep gravel pits without the Mannheim gate of Heidelberg, loess is seen interstratified with gravel; and here more than one bed containing entire land and freshwater shells rests upon, and is covered by, a stratum of gravel, showing the effects of successive accumulation. I observed the same fact in the valley of the Lahn, north of Limburg, near the village of Elz; and Professor Bronn informs me, that the calcareous concretions of the loess are sometimes arranged in horizontal layers, marking a difference in the carbonate of lime with which the sediment must have been charged at different periods.

It should also be observed that many of the terrestrial and aquatic shells preserved in this silt are of the most fragile and delicate structure, and must, for the most part, have been broken to pieces if they had been swept along by a violent inundation of force sufficient to transport pebbles; whereas the shells are almost invariably perfect and uninjured, even in those places where the loamy beds of loess alternate with gravel.

The most widely spread and abundant fossils in this formation are *Helix plebeium*, *Pupa muscorum*, and *Succinea elongata* (see Figs. 111. 112. 113.). The last-mentioned shell is amphibious, and such as may have been washed away from the banks of streams during floods. The proportion of land shells of the genera *Helix*, *Pupa*, and *Bulimus*, is very large; but in many places aquatic species of the genera *Limnea*, *Paludina*, and *Planorbis* are also found. I have never detected the *Unio* or *Neritina*



among the rest, but, with these exceptions, there is a great *generic* resemblance between the assemblage of fossils in the loess and the shells which the Rhine carries down in our own time to the sea. With a view of ascertaining this point I collected, in the summer of 1833, several hundred shells, which were exposed on the margin of the Rhine on the fall of the waters, or had been cast ashore by large waves raised by the steamboats; and they proved to be, for the most part, terrestrial species of the genera *Helix* and *Pupa*, with some shells of *Limnea*, *Paludina*, and *Planorbis*, which may have been washed away during floods from pools and marshes bordering the river.

Bones of vertebrated animals are rare in the loess, but those of the mammoth, horse, and some other quadrupeds have been met with. At the village of Binningen, and the hills called Bruder Holz, near Basle, I found the vertebræ of fish together with the usual shells. These vertebræ, according to M. Agassiz, belong decidedly to the Shark family, perhaps to the genus *Lamna*; and although it seemed, at first, extraordinary that they should occur among land and freshwater shells, I am informed, in explanation of the fact, that certain fish of this family ascend the Senegal, Amazon, and other great rivers, to the distance of several hundred miles from the ocean.*

The reader is probably aware that on both sides of the Rhine, between Bonn and Coblenz, there is a region of extinct volcanos. Now, on visiting part of this country, near Andernach, and examining the sections which have been well described by MM. Steininger, Hibbert, and others, I perceived clear evidence that some of the last volcanic eruptions of the Lower Eifel took place both during and since the deposition of the loess. The loamy sediment may be seen in the Kirchweg, above Andernach, alternating with volcanic matter, over which is a mass of pure and unmixed loess, thirty feet and upwards in thickness, containing the usual shells; and over the whole are strewed layers of pumice, lapilli, and volcanic sand, from ten to fifteen feet thick, very much resembling the ejections under which Pompeii lies buried. There is no passage at this upper junction from the loess into the pumiceous superstratum; and this last follows the slope of the hill, just as it would have done had it fallen in showers from the air on a declivity partly formed of loess.

* Proceedings of Geol. Soc., No. 43, p. 222.

In general, however, the loess overlies almost all the volcanic products, even those between Neuwied and Bonn, which have the most modern aspect ; and it has filled up in part the crater of the Roderberg, a volcanic hill near Bonn. It was in 1833 that a well was sunk at the bottom of this crater through seventy feet of loess, in part of which were the usual calcareous concretions.

It has been ascertained that the waters of the Rhine, when evaporated, leave a residuum of calcareous loam, not distinguishable from loess ;* so that if these waters should now overflow the low lands adjoining the river, they might give rise to a deposit having the same mineral characters as the loess, and which would contain, as I have already shown (p. 291), fossil shells for the most part of the same genera.

The first idea which has probably occurred to every one, after examining the loess between Mayence and Basle, is, to imagine that a great lake once extended throughout the valley of the Rhine between those two places. Such a lake may have sent off large branches up the course of the Mayne, Neckar, and other tributary valleys, in all of which large patches of loess are now seen. The barrier of the lake might be placed somewhere in the narrow and picturesque gorge of the Rhine between Bingen and Bonn. But this theory is insufficient to explain the phenomena ; for that gorge itself has once been filled with loess, which must have been tranquilly deposited in it, as also in the lateral valley of the Lahn, communicating with the gorge. The loess has also overspread the high adjoining platform near the village of Plaidt, above Andernach. Nay, on proceeding farther down to the north, we discover that the hills which skirt the valley between Bonn and Cologne have loess on their flanks, which also covers here and there the gravel of the plain as far as Cologne.

Besides these objections to the lake theory it will be remembered, that the loess is met with near Basle, capping hills more than 1200 feet above the sea, so that a barrier of land capable of separating the supposed lake from the ocean would require to be at least as high as the mountains called the Siebengebirge, near Bonn, the loftiest summit of which, the Oehlberg, is only 1209 feet above the Rhine and 1369 feet above the sea. It would be necessary, moreover, to place this lofty barrier somewhere below Cologne, that is to say, precisely where the level of the land is now lowest.

Instead, therefore, of supposing one continuous lake of sufficient extent and depth to allow of the simultaneous accumulation of the loess, at various heights, throughout the whole area where it now occurs, I conceive that, subsequently to the period when the countries now drained by the Rhine and its tributaries acquired nearly their actual form and geographi-

* See Mr. Horner, on the Sediment of the Rhine : Proceedings of Geol. Soc. 1834.

cal features, they were again depressed gradually by a movement like that now in progress on the west coast of Greenland. In proportion as the whole district was lowered, the general fall of the waters between the Alps and the ocean was lessened ; and both the main and lateral valleys, becoming more subject to river inundations, were partially filled up with fluvatile silt, containing land and freshwater shells. When a thickness of many hundred feet of loess had been thrown down slowly by this operation, the whole region was once more upheaved gradually, but perhaps not equally in all parts. During this upward movement most of the fine loam would be carried off by the denuding power of rains and rivers ; and thus the original valleys may have been re-excavated, and the country almost restored to its pristine state, with the exception of some masses and patches of loess still remaining, which, from their frequency and remarkable homogeneousness of composition and fossils, attest the ancient continuity and common origin of the whole. By introducing such general fluctuations of relative level, we dispense with the necessity of erecting, and afterwards removing, a mountain barrier sufficiently high to exclude the ocean from the valley of the Rhine during the period of the accumulation of the loess.

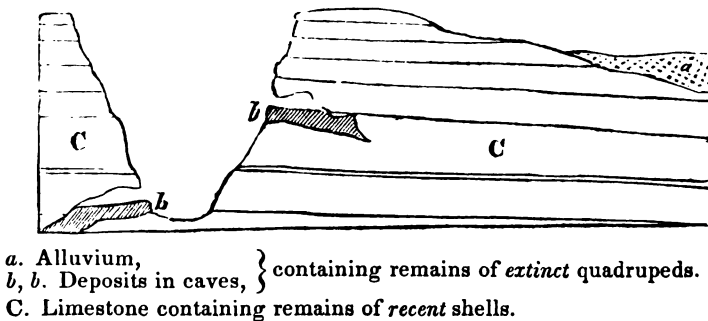
The hypothesis above suggested may, perhaps, be better understood if we consider what would happen if similar alterations of level should occur in another part of the world. It has been shown (Vol. I. p. 185) that several large lakes have recently been formed in the basin of the Red River, in Louisiana, and that trees are still standing there under water. One of these lakes is no less than thirty miles long, into which, as into others, the waters of the Red River flow up during floods, the main stream at such seasons invading some of the valleys of its tributaries. Whatever may be the causes of this singular state of things in Louisiana, it is clear that analogous effects might arise from partial depressions of land. It is also evident that if a general subsidence should take place in the hydrographical basin alluded to, the fall of the waters between the Rocky Mountains and the ocean would be lessened, and, consequently, there would be an increased liability to river inundations in all the plains and valleys of the same basin. Under these circumstances, the red ochreous sediment from which the Red River derives its name would be deposited in the main and partially in the lateral valleys ; and as the course of the Red River is double in length that of the Rhine, the area covered by red fluvatile silt might be vast in proportion. It may also be observed that the number of temporary lakes and marshes, occasioned by frequent overflowings and partial subsidences of land, would favour greatly the growth of amphibious mollusks of the genus *Succinea* ; while at the same time, land and freshwater shells would annually be swept away and imbedded in mud, which, like that of the Nile in Egypt, would be thrown down periodically on the plains. The thickness of the muddy

deposits would depend on the quantity of time during which the country continued to sink, provided the rate of sinking be sufficiently slow to allow of the water being charged again and again with fresh sediment. The re-elevation of the district at a subsequent period would be attended with extensive denudation, or removal of fine sediment. The colour of the loam might, in this instance, be as uniformly red as it is yellow in the valley of the Rhine; while, in other respects, the phenomena would be analogous, and such as might appear, at first sight, to indicate the former existence of an enormous lake more than 1000 feet deep and several hundred miles in length.*

Osseous breccias—Sicily.—The breccias lately found in several caves in Sicily belong evidently to the period under consideration. I have shown, in the sixth chapter, that the cavernous limestone of the Val di Noto is of very modern date, as it contains a great abundance of fossil shells of recent species; and if any breccias are found in the caverns of this rock, they must be of still later origin.

We are informed by M. Hoffmann, that the bones of the mammoth, and of an extinct species of hippopotamus, have been discovered in the stalactite of caves near Sortino, of which the situation is represented in the annexed diagram at *b*. The same author also describes a breccia, containing the bones of an extinct rhinoceros and hippopotamus, in a cave in

Fig. 114.



the neighbourhood of Syracuse, where the country is composed entirely of the Val di Noto limestone. Some of the fragments in the breccia are perforated by lithodomi, and the whole mass is covered by a deposit of marine clay filled with recent shells.† These phenomena may, I think, be explained by supposing such oscillations of level as are known

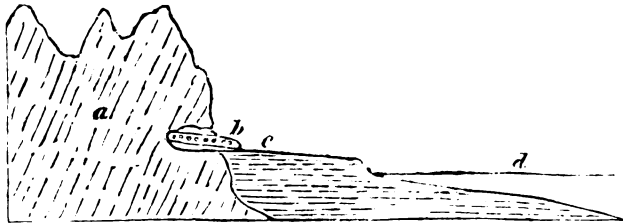
* For particulars concerning the loess of the Rhine, consult the works of MM. Bronn, Leonhard, Boué, Voltz, Noeggerath, Steininger, Merian, Rozet, Von Meyer, Hibbert, and Horner.

† Hoffmann, *Archiv für Mineralogie*, p. 393. Berlin, 1831. Dr. Christie, *Proceedings of Geol. Soc.*, No. xxiii. p. 333.

to occur on maritime coasts where earthquakes prevail—such, in fact, as have been witnessed on the shores of the Bay of Baiæ within the last three centuries.* For it is evident that the temporary submergence of a cave filled with osseous breccia might afford time for the perforation of the rock by boring testacea, and for the deposition upon it of mud, sand, and shells.

The association in these and other localities of shells of living species with the remains of extinct mammalia is very distinct, and corroborates the inference adverted to in a former chapter, that the longevity of *species* in the mammalia is, upon the whole, inferior to that of the testacea. I am by no means inclined to refer this circumstance to the intervention of man, and his power of extirpating the larger quadrupeds; for the succession of mammiferous species appears to have been in like manner comparatively rapid throughout the older tertiary periods. Their more

Fig. 115.



a. Monte Grifone.

b. Cave of San Ciro.†

c. Plain of Palermo, in which are Newer Pliocene strata of limestone and sand.

d. Bay of Palermo.

limited duration depends, in all probability, on physiological laws, which render warm-blooded quadrupeds less capable, in general, of accommodating themselves to a great variety of circumstances, and, consequently, of surviving the vicissitudes to which the earth's surface is exposed in a great lapse of ages.‡

Caves near Palermo.—The caves near Palermo exhibit appearances very analogous to those above described, and much curious information has been lately published respecting them. According to Hoffmann, the grotto of San Ciro is distant about two miles from Palermo, and is twenty feet high and ten wide. It occurs in a secondary limestone, in the Monte Grifone, at the base of a rocky precipice about 180 feet above the sea. From the foot of this precipice an inclined plane, consisting of horizontal

* Vol. I. p. 426.

† Section given by Dr. Christie, Edin. New Phil. Journ., No. xxiii., called by mistake the Cave of Mardolce, by the late M. Hoffmann. See account by Mr. S. P. Pratt, F.G.S., Proceedings of Geol. Soc., No. 32. 1833.

‡ See ante, p. 67, and Book I. chap. vi.

tertiary strata, of the Newer Pliocene period, extends to the sea, a distance of about a mile.

The limestone escarpment was evidently once a sea-cliff, and the ancient beach still remains formed of pebbles of various rocks, many of which must have been brought from places far remote. Broken pieces of coral and shell, especially of oysters and pectens, are seen intermingled with the pebbles. Immediately above the level of this beach, serpulæ are still found adhering to the face of the rock, and the limestone is perforated by lithodomi. Within the grotto, also, at the same level, similar perforations occur; and so numerous are the holes, that the rock is compared by Hoffmann to a target pierced by musket balls. But in order to expose to view these marks of boring-shells in the interior of the cave, it was necessary first to remove a mass of breccia, which consisted of numerous fragments of rock and an immense quantity of bones imbedded in a dark brown calcareous marl. Many of the bones were rolled as if partially subjected to the action of the waves. Below this breccia, which is about twenty feet thick, was found a bed of sand filled with sea-shells of recent species; and underneath the sand, again, is the secondary limestone of Monte Grifone. The state of the surface of the limestone in the cave above the level of the marine sand is very different from that below it. *Above*, the rock is jagged and uneven, as is usual in the roofs and sides of limestone caverns; *below*, the surface is smooth and polished, as if by the attrition of the waves.

So enormous was the quantity of bones, that many ship-loads were exported in the years 1829 and 1830, in the hope of their retaining a sufficient quantity of gelatine to serve for refining sugar; for which, however, they proved useless. The bones belong chiefly to the mammoth (*E. primigenius*), and with them are those of an hippopotamus, distinct from the recent species, and smaller than that usually found fossil. Several species of deer, also, and, according to some accounts, the remains of a bear, were discovered.

It is easy to explain in what manner the cavern of San Ciro was in part filled with sea sand, and how the surface of the limestone became perforated by lithodomi; but in what manner, when the elevation of the rocks and the ancient beach had taken place, was the superimposed osseous breccia formed? For want of more exact local details, it would be rash to speculate on this subject: but by referring to what was previously said of caverns near the sea-shore of the Morea, from which rivers escape, the reader may conceive that caves, after having been submerged and filled with sea-sand, may afterwards be upraised and flooded by the waters of engulfed rivers washing down animal remains from the land.*

Two other caverns are described by Dr. Christie as occurring in Mount Bellemi, about four miles west of Palermo, at a higher elevation than that

* See ante, p. 128.

of San Ciro, being more than three hundred feet above the level of the sea. In one of these places the bones are found only in a talus at the outside of the cavern; in the other, they occur both within the cave and in the talus which slopes from it to the plain below. These caves appear to be situated much above the highest point attained by the tertiary deposits in this neighbourhood; nor is there the slightest appearance in the caves themselves of the sea having been there.*

Australian cave-breccias.—Ossiferous breccias have lately been discovered in fissured and cavernous limestone in Australia, and the remains of the fossil mammalia are found to be referable to species now living in that country, mingled with some relics of extinct animals. Some of these caves have been examined by Major Mitchell, in the Wellington Valley, about 210 miles west of Sidney, on the river Bell, one of the principal sources of the Macquarie, and on the Macquarie itself.

The fissures and caverns appear to correspond closely with those which contain similar osseous breccias in Europe; they often branch off in different directions through the rock, widening and contracting their dimensions, the roofs and floors being covered with stalactite. The bones are often broken, but do not seem to be water-worn. In some caves and fissures they lie imbedded in loose earth, but usually they are included in a breccia, having a red ochreous cement as hard as limestone, and like that of the Mediterranean caves.

The remains found most abundantly are those of the kangaroo. Amongst others, those of the Wombat, *Dasyurus*, *Kaola*, and *Phalangista*, have been recognised. The greater part of them belong to existing, but some to extinct, species. One of the latter bones, of much greater size than the rest, is supposed, by Mr. Clift, to belong to an hippopotamus.†

In a collection of these bones sent to Paris, Mr. Pentland thought he could recognise a species of *Halmaturus*, exceeding in size the largest living kangaroo.‡

These facts are full of interest, for they prove that the peculiar type of organization which now characterizes the marsupial tribes has prevailed from a remote period in Australia; and that in that continent, as in Europe, North and South America, and India, some species of mammalia have become extinct. It also appears, although the evidence on this point is incomplete, that among the extinct were land quadrupeds far exceeding in magnitude any of the wild animals now inhabiting New Holland.§

* Dr. T. Christie, Jameson, Edin. New Phil. Jour., No. xxiii. p. 1.

† Mr. Clift. Edin. New Phil. Journ., No. xx. p. 394. Major Mitchell, Proceedings of Geol. Soc., 1831, p. 321.

‡ Journ. de Géologie, tome iii. p. 291. The bone mentioned as that of an *elephant* by Mr. Pentland, was the same large bone alluded to by Mr. Clift.

§ For remarks on the mode in which these caverns may have been filled with osseous breccias, see ante, p. 128.

Newer Pliocene Alluviums.—Some writers have attempted to introduce into their classification of geological periods an *alluvial epoch*, as if the transportation of loose matter from one part of the surface of the land to another had been the work of one particular period.

With equal propriety might they have endeavoured to institute a volcanic period, or a period of marine or fresh-water deposition; for alluvial formations must have originated in every age, since the surface of the earth was first divided into land and sea, but most rapidly in any given district at those periods when land has been upheaved above, or depressed below, its former level.*

If those geologists who speak of an “alluvial epoch” intend merely to say that a great part of the European alluviums are *tertiary*, there may undoubtedly be much truth in the opinion; for the larger part of the existing continent of Europe has emerged from beneath the waters during some one or other of the tertiary periods;† and it is probable, that even those districts which were land before the commencement of the tertiary epoch, may have shared in the subterranean convulsions by which the levels of adjoining countries have since been altered. During such subterranean movements new alluviums might be formed in great abundance, and those of more ancient date so modified as to retain scarcely any of their original distinguishing characters.

During the gradual rise of a large area, first from beneath the waters, and then to a great height above them, several kinds of superficial gravel must be formed and transported from one place to another. When the first islets begin to appear, and the breakers are foaming upon the new raised reefs, many rocky fragments are torn off and rolled along the bottom of the sea.

Let the reader recall to mind the action of the tides and currents off the coast of Shetland, where blocks of granite, gneiss, porphyry, and serpentine, of enormous dimensions, are continually detached from wasting cliffs during storms, and carried in a few hours to a distance of many hundred yards from the parent rocks.‡ Suppose the floor of the ocean, after being thus strewed over with detached blocks and pebbles, to be converted partially into land, the geologist might then, perhaps, search in vain for the masses from which the fragments were originally derived, since part of these may have been consumed by the waves, and the rest may remain submerged beneath them.

If this new land be then uplifted to a considerable height, the marine alluvium before alluded to would be raised up on the summits of the hills and on the surface of elevated platforms. It might still constitute the general covering of the country, being wanting only in such valleys and

* See definition of alluvium, ante, p. 122, 123.

† See Map, Vol. I. p. 141.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 245.

ravines as may have been caused by earthquakes, or excavated by the power of running water during the rise of the land; for the alluvium in those more modern valleys would consist partly of pebbles washed out of the older gravel before mentioned, but chiefly of fragments derived from the rocks which were removed during the erosion of the valleys themselves.

Erratic blocks.—Blocks of extraordinary magnitude have been observed at the foot of the Alps, and at a considerable height in some of the valleys of the Jura, exactly opposite the principal openings by which great rivers descend from the Alps. These fragments have been called “erratic,” and many imaginary causes have been invented to account for their transportation. Some have talked of chasms opening in the ground immediately below, and of huge fragments having been cast out of them from the bowels of the earth. Others have referred to the deluge, an agent in which a simple solution is so often found of every difficult problem exhibited by alluvial phenomena; and more recently, the sudden rise of mountain-chains has been introduced as a cause which may have given rise to diluvial waves, capable of devastating whole continents, and drifting huge blocks from one part of the earth’s surface to another.

It seems necessary to suppose that the Jura once formed a prolongation of the Alps, and that large fragments of rock were, at a remote period, detached from the Alpine summits, and transported to lower hills or platforms, which were destined afterwards to be upraised and to form the independent chain now called the Jura. Ice, as has been often suggested, may have contributed its aid to the transfer of such blocks; for some of the masses are so enormous, that not even a flood like that in the valley of Bagnes, in 1818,* can be supposed to have conveyed them to considerable distances by the power of water alone.

That the Alps must have been moved and shaken by earthquakes at periods comparatively modern, is evident from the fact that they are skirted on their northern, southern, and eastern flanks by marine tertiary strata. When these were raised into their present position, to the height of many hundred feet above the sea, the whole of the older chain must have participated in the convulsions.

It is important, therefore, to consider what would now happen if regions like that of Mont Blanc were subjected to earthquakes. Large fragments of rock, detached by the action of rain and frost from the peaks or “needles,” as they are called, of Chamouni, fall annually on the surface of the glaciers, and are gradually transported by ice to the distance of many leagues into the valleys below.† The shock of an earthquake would throw down a prodigious load of similar but far heavier masses, accompanied by avalanches of snow and ice, by which the moraine of the glacier would be greatly enlarged. If the shocks took place on the eve of

* See Vol. I. pp. 187, 188.

† Vol. I. p. 173.

a thaw in spring, when the accumulated snows of winter were beginning to melt, they would cause almost every where immense avalanches, by which many narrow gorges might be choked up, so that the valleys above such barriers of snow, ice, and rock would be converted into lakes. Portions of the rent glaciers, moreover, would at their lower extremities be covered with water, and might be floated off together with incumbent and included fragments of rock. At length, on the bursting of the temporary barrier, the whole mass of waters, together with huge rocks buoyed up by ice, would descend with tremendous violence into the lower country.

The manner in which the ice of rivers and of the sea itself contributes, in the Baltic and other northern regions, to transport large blocks, as well as smaller pieces of stone, to vast distances, has been treated of in a former chapter.*

Sicily.—Assuming, then, that almost all the European alluviums are tertiary, we have next to inquire which of them are of Newer Pliocene origin. It is clear that, when a district like the Val di Noto, is composed of rocks of this age, all the alluvium upon the surface must necessarily belong either to the Newer Pliocene or the Recent epoch. If, therefore, the elevation of the mountains of the Val di Noto was chiefly accomplished antecedently to the Recent epoch, we must at once pronounce all alluviums, in the position indicated at *a*, Fig. 114. (ante, p. 294), to belong to the Newer Pliocene era. I saw gravel so situated at Grammichele in Sicily, and was informed that it contained the bones of the mammoth.

CHAPTER XII.

OLDER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS.

Geological monuments of the *older* Pliocene period—Subapennine formations—Opinions of Brocchi—Different groups termed by him Subapennine are not all of the same age—Mineral composition of the Subapennine formations—Marls—Yellow sand and gravel—Subapennine beds, how formed (p. 304.)—Illustration derived from the Upper Val d'Arno—Organic remains of Subapennine hills—Older Pliocene strata at the base of the Maritime Alps—Genoa (p. 309)—Savona—Albenga—Nice—Conglomerate of Valley of Magnan—Its origin—Tertiary strata at the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees.

Subapennine strata.—We must now carry our retrospect one step farther, and treat of the monuments of the era immediately antecedent to that last

* See Vol. I. p. 174.

considered. The Apennines, it is well known, are composed chiefly of secondary rocks, forming a chain which branches off from the Ligurian Alps and passes down the middle of the Italian peninsula. At the foot of these mountains, on the side both of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, are found a series of tertiary strata which form, for the most part, a line of low hills occupying the space between the older chain and the sea. Brocchi, the first Italian geologist who described this newer group in detail, gave it the name of the Subapennines; and he classed all the tertiary strata of Italy from Piedmont to Calabria, as parts of the same system. Certain mineral characters, he observed, were common to the whole; for the strata consist generally of light brown or blue marl, covered by yellow calcareous sand and gravel. There are also, he added, some species of fossil shells which are found in these deposits throughout the whole of Italy.

In a catalogue, published by Lamarck, of five hundred species of fossil-shells of the Paris basin, a small number only were enumerated as identical with those of Italy, and only twenty as agreeing with living species. This result, said Brocchi, is wonderful, and very different from that derived from a comparison of the fossil-shells of Italy, *more than half of which* agree with species now living in the Mediterranean, or in other seas chiefly of hotter climates.*

He also stated, that it appeared from the observations of Parkinson, that the clay of London, like that of the Subapennine hills, was covered by sand (alluding to the crag), and that in that upper formation of sand in England the species of shells corresponded much more closely with those now living in the ocean than did the species of the subjacent clay. Hence he inferred that an interval of time had separated the origin of the two groups. But in Italy, he goes on to say, the shells found in the marl and superincumbent sand belong entirely to the same group, and must have been deposited under the same circumstances.†

Notwithstanding the correctness of these views, Brocchi conceived that the Italian tertiary strata, as a whole, might agree with those of the basins of Paris and London; and he endeavoured to explain the discordance of their fossil contents by remarking, that the testacea of the Mediterranean differ now from those living in the ocean.‡ In attempting thus to assimilate the age of these distinct groups, he was evidently influenced by his adherence to the anciently received theory of the gradual fall of the level of the ocean, to which, and not to the successive rise of the land, he attributed the emergence of the tertiary strata; all of which he consequently imagined to have remained under water down to a comparatively recent period.

Brocchi was perfectly justified in affirming that there were some spe-

* Conch. Foss. Subap., tom. i. p. 148.

† Ibid., p. 147.

‡ Ibid. p. 166.

cies of shells common to all the strata called by him Subapennine ; but I have shown that this fact is not inconsistent with the conclusion, that the several deposits may have originated at different periods, for there are species of shells common to all the tertiary eras. He seems to have been aware, however, of the insufficiency of his data ; for in giving a list of species universally distributed throughout Italy, he candidly admits his inability to determine whether the shells of Piedmont were all identical with those of Tuscany, and whether those of the northern and southern extremities of Italy corresponded.*

We have already satisfactory evidence that the Subapennine beds of Brocchi belonged, at least, to three periods. To the Miocene we can refer a portion of the strata of Piedmont, those of the hill of the Superga, for example ; to the Older Pliocene belong the greater part of the strata of northern Italy and of Tuscany, and perhaps those of Rome ; to the Newer Pliocene, the tufaceous formations of Naples, the calcareous strata of Otranto, and probably the greater part of the tertiary beds of Calabria.

That there is a considerable correspondence in the arrangement and mineral composition of these different Italian groups, is undeniable ; but not that close resemblance which should lead us to assume an exact identity of age, even had the fossil remains been less dissimilar.

Very erroneous notions have been entertained respecting the contrast between the lithological characters of the Italian strata and certain groups of higher antiquity. Dr. MacCulloch has treated of the Italian tertiary beds under the general title of “elevated submarine alluvia ;” and the overlying yellow sand and gravel may, according to him, be wholly, or in part, a terrestrial alluvium.† Had he visited Italy, I am persuaded that he would never have considered the tertiary strata of London and Paris as belonging to formations of a different order from the Subapennine groups, or as being more regularly stratified. He seems to have been misled by Brocchi’s description, who contrasts the more crystalline and solid texture of the older secondary rocks of the Apennines with the loose and incoherent nature of the Subapennine beds, which resemble, he says, the mud and sand now deposited by the sea.

I have endeavoured, in a former chapter, to restrict within definite limits the meaning of the term *alluvium* ;‡ but if the Subapennine beds are to be designated “marine alluvia,” the same name might, with equal propriety, be applied not only to the argillaceous and sandy groups of the London and Hampshire basins, but to a very great portion of our secondary series, where the marls, clays, and sands are as imperfectly consolidated as are the tertiary strata of Italy in general.

They who have been inclined to associate the idea of the more stony

* Conch. Foss. Subap., tom. i. p. 143.

† Syst. of Geol., vol. i. chap. xv.

‡ Ante, p. 122.

texture of stratified deposits with a comparatively higher antiquity, should consider how dissimilar, in this respect, are the tertiary groups of London and Paris, although admitted to be of contemporaneous date; or they should visit Sicily, and behold a soft brown marl, identical in mineral character with that of the Subapennine beds, underlying a mass of solid and regularly stratified limestone, rivalling the chalk of England in thickness. This Sicilian marl is older than the superincumbent limestone, but newer than the Subapennine marl of the north of Italy; for in the latter the extinct shells rather predominate over the recent, in the Sicilian strata the recent species predominate almost to the exclusion of the extinct.

Subapennine marls.—I shall now consider more particularly the characters of those Subapennine beds which may be referred to the Older Pliocene period.

The most important member of the Subapennine formation is a marl which varies in colour from grayish brown to blue. It is very aluminous, and usually contains much calcareous matter and scales of mica. It often exhibits no lines of division throughout a considerable thickness, but in other places it is thinly laminated. Near Parma, for example, I have counted thirty distinct laminæ in the thickness of an inch. In some of the hills near that city the marl attains, according to Signor Guidotti, a thickness of nearly two thousand feet, and is charged throughout with shells, many of which are such as inhabit a deep sea. They often occur in layers in such a manner as to indicate their slow and gradual accumulation. They are not flattened, but are filled with marl. Beds of lignite are sometimes interstratified, as at Medesano, four leagues from Parma; subordinate beds of gypsum also occur in many places, as at Vigolano and Bargone, in the territory of Parma, where they are interstratified with shelly marl and sand. At Lezignano, in the Monte Cerio, the sulphate of lime is found in lenticular crystals, in which unaltered shells are sometimes included. Signor Guidotti, who showed me specimens of this gypsum, remarked, that the sulphuric acid must have been fully saturated with lime when the shells were enveloped, so that it could not act upon the shell. According to Brocchi, the marl sometimes passes from a soft and pulverulent substance into a compact limestone, but it is rarely found in this solid form.* It is also occasionally interstratified with sandstone.

The marl constitutes very frequently the surface of the country, having no covering of sand. It is sometimes seen reposing immediately on the Apennine limestone; more rarely gravel intervenes, as in the hills of San Quirico.† Volcanic rocks are here and there superimposed, as at Radicofani, in Tuscany, where a hill composed of marl, with some few shells interspersed, is capped by basalt. Several of the volcanic tuffs in the same place are so interstratified with the marls as to show that the eruptions

* *Conch. Foss. Subap.*, tom i. p. 82.

† *Ibid.* p. 78.

took place in the sea during the Older Pliocene period. At Acquapendente, Viterbo, and other places, hills of the same formation are capped with trachytic lava, and with tuffs which appear evidently to have been subaqueous.

Yellow sand.—The other member of the Subapennine group, the yellow sand and conglomerate, constitutes, in most of the places where I have seen it, a border formation near the junction of the tertiary and secondary rocks. In some cases, as near the town of Sienna, we see sand and calcareous gravel resting immediately on the Apennine limestone, without the intervention of any blue marl. Alternations are there seen of beds containing fluviatile shells, with others filled exclusively with marine species; and I observed oysters attached to many of the pebbles of limestone. This appears to have been a point where a river, flowing from the Apennines, entered the sea in which the tertiary strata were formed.

Between Florence and Poggibonsi, in Tuscany, there is a great range of conglomerate of the Subapennine beds, which is seen for eleven miles continuously from Casciano to the south of Barberino. The pebbles are chiefly of whitish limestone, with some sandstone. On receding from the older Apennine rocks, the conglomerate passes into yellow sand and sandstone, with shells, the whole overlying blue marl. In such cases we may suppose the deltas of rivers and torrents to have gained upon the bed of a sea where blue marl had previously been deposited.

The upper arenaceous group above described sometime passes into a calcareous sandstone, as at San Vignone. It contains lapidified shells more frequently than the marl, owing probably to the more free percolation of mineral waters, which often dissolve and carry away the original component elements of fossil bodies, and substitute others in their place. In some cases the shells imbedded in this group are silicified, as at San Vitale, near Parma, from whence I saw two individuals of recent species, one freshwater and the other marine (*Limnea palustris*, and *Cytherea concentrica*, Lamk.), both perfectly converted into flint.

On the other hand, the shells of Monte Mario, near Rome, which are probably referable to the same formation, are changed into calcareous spar, the form being preserved notwithstanding the crystallization of the carbonate of lime.

Mode of formation of the Subapennine beds.—The tertiary strata above described have resulted from the waste of the secondary rocks which now form the Apennines, and which had become dry land before the Older Pliocene beds were deposited. In the territory of Placentia we have an opportunity of observing the kind of sediment which the rivers are now bringing down from the Apennines. The tertiary marl of that district being too calcareous to be used for bricks or pottery, a substitute is obtained by conveying into tanks the turbid waters of the rivers Braganza, Parma, Taro, and Enza. In the course of a year a deposit of brown clay,

much resembling some of the Subapennine marl, is procured, several feet in thickness, divided into thin laminæ of different shades of colour.

In regard to the sand and gravel, we see yellow sand thrown down by the Tiber near Rome, and by the Arno, at Florence. The northern part of the Apennines consists of a gray micaceous sandstone with an argillaceous base, alternating with shale, from the degradation of which brown clay and sand would result. If a river flow through such strata, and some one of its tributaries drains the ordinary limestone of the Apennines, the clay might become marly by the intermixture of calcareous matter. The sand is frequently yellow from being stained by oxide of iron; but this colour is by no means constant.

The similarity in composition of the tertiary strata in the basins of the Po, the Arno, and the Tiber, is merely such as might be expected to arise from their having been all derived from the disintegration of the same continuous chain of secondary rocks. But it does not follow that the latter rocks were all upheaved and exposed to degradation at the same time. The correspondence of the tertiary groups consists in their being all alike composed of marl, clay and sand; but we might say as much of the beds of the London and Hampshire basins, although the English and Italian groups, thus compared, belong nearly to the two opposite extremes of the tertiary series.

The similarity in mineral character of the lacustrine deposit of the Upper Val d'Arno, and the marine Subapennine hills of northern Italy, ought to serve as a caution to the geologist, not to infer too hastily a contemporaneous origin from identity of mineral composition. The deposit of the Upper Val d'Arno occurs nearly at the bottom of a deep narrow valley, which is surrounded by precipitous rocks of secondary sandstone and shale (the *macigno* of the Italians, and *graywacké* of the Germans). Hills of yellow sand, of considerable thickness, appear around the margin of the small basin; while, towards the central parts, where there has been considerable denudation, and where the Arno flows, blue clay is seen underlying the yellow sand. The shells are of fresh water origin, but I shall speak more particularly of them when discussing the probable age of this formation in the sixteenth chapter. I desire at present to call attention to the fact, that we have here, in an isolated basin, such a formation as would result from the waste of the contiguous secondary rocks of the Apennines, fragments of which rocks are found in the sand and conglomerate. We might expect that, if the fresh-water beds were removed, and the barrier of the lake-basin closed up again, similar sediment would be again deposited; since the aqueous agents would operate in the same manner, at whatever period they might be in activity. Now, the only difference in mineral composition, between the lacustrine deposit and the ordinary marine and Subapennine strata, consists in the absence of calcareous matter from the clay; and this may be ascribed to the cir-

cumstances that the torrents flowing into the lake had passed over no limestone rocks.

The lithological character of the Subapennine beds varies in different parts of the Peninsula both in colour and degree of solidity. The presence, also, or absence of lignite and gypsum, and the association or non-association of volcanic rocks, are causes of great local discrepancy. The superposition of the sand and conglomerate to the marl, on the other hand, is a general point of agreement, although there are exceptions to the rule, as at San Quirico before mentioned. The cause of this arrangement may be, as I before hinted, that the arenaceous groups were first formed on the coast where rivers entered; and when these pushed their deltas farther out, they threw down the sand upon part of the bed of the sea already occupied by finer and more transportable mud.

Captain Bayfield, in his Survey of the Coast of St. Lawrence, mentions horizontal strata of sand and gravel, and a subjacent deposit of clay, as reposing in depressions in the older rocks near the shore. The clay invariably occupies the lowest position, and the gravel the highest; and this arrangement, he says, may be explained by considering that the rivers where they now bring down alluvial matter on several parts of this coast, carry gravel over a bottom previously occupied by clay, the finer sediment having first been drifted farther from the shore.*

When Captain Bayfield proposed this theory, he had not seen my work; and it was satisfactory to observe the exact coincidence of his views with my own, his having been suggested by the modern changes going on in the St. Lawrence, mine by reasoning on appearances in the interior of Italy.

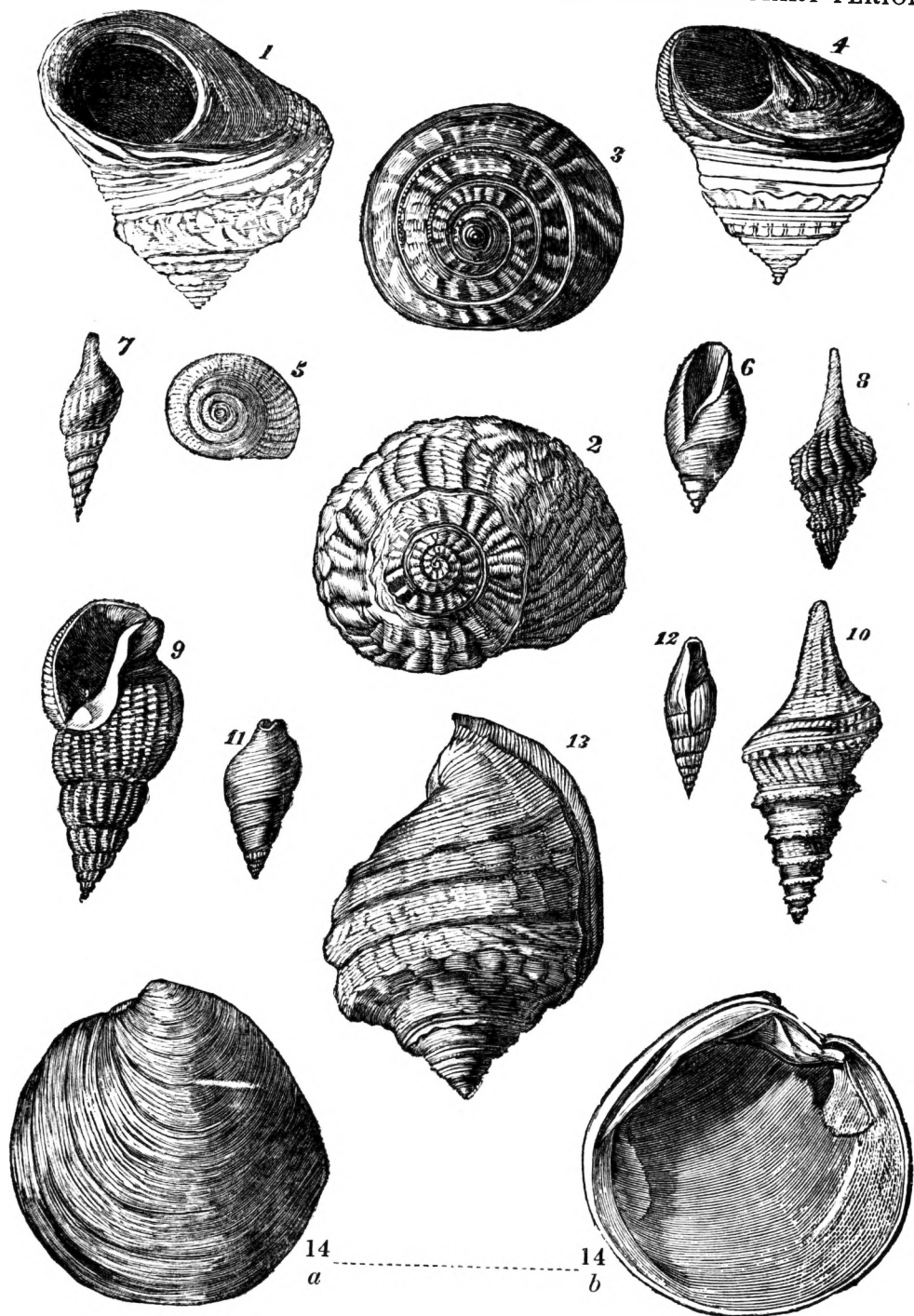
Organic remains.—Figures of some of the most abundant shells of the Subapennine formations are given in the accompanying plate (Pl. X.). The greater part of them are common both to the Older and Newer Pliocene periods of this work. Eight of the species, Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, and 14, are now living, but are also common in the *older* Pliocene formations. *Fusus crispus* has not been found either *recent*, or in the Miocene or Eocene formations, but occurs both in the Older and Newer Pliocene formations. *Mitra plicatula* has been observed only in the Older Pliocene deposits. The *Turbo rugosus* was formerly considered as exclusively Pliocene; but M. Boué has since found it in the Miocene strata at Vienna and Moravia. *Buccinum semistriatum* is also a Miocene shell, but has been inserted as being peculiarly abundant in the Pliocene strata.

The Subapennine testacea are referable to species and families of which the habits are extremely diversified, some living in deep, others in shallow water, some in rivers or at their mouths. I have seen a specimen of a

* An abstract of this paper will be found in the Proceedings of the Geol. Soc., No. 33, p. 4.

FOSSIL SHELLS.

PLIOCENE TERTIARY PERIODS.



- 1, 2. *Turbo rugosus*, Lin.
- 3, 4. *Trochus mágus*, Lin.
5. *Solarium variegatum*, Lamk.
6. *Tornatella fasciata*, Lamk.
7. *Pleurotoma vulpecula*, Broc.
8. *Fusus crispus*, Bors.

9. *Buccinum prismaticum*, Bors.
10. *Pleurotoma rotata*, Broc.
11. *Buccinum semistriatum*, Broc.
12. *Mitra plicatula*, Broc.
13. *Cassidaria echinophora*, Lamk.
14. *Cytherca exoleta*, Lamk. var.

freshwater univalve (*Limnea palustris*), taken from the blue marl near Parma, full of small *marine* shells. It may have been floated down by the same causes which carried wood and leaves into the ancient sea.

I have been informed, by experienced collectors of the Subapennine fossils, that they invariably procure the greatest number in those winters when the rains are most abundant; an annual crop, as it were, being washed out of the soil to replace those which the action of moisture, frost, and the rays of the sun soon reduce to dust upon the surface.

The shells, in general, are soft when first taken from the marl, but they become hard when dried. The superficial enamel is often well preserved, and many shells retain their pearly lustre, and part of their external colour, and even the ligament which unites the valves. No shells are more usually perfect than the microscopic, which abound near Sienna, where more than a thousand full grown individuals are sometimes poured out of the interior of a single univalve of moderate dimensions. In some large tracts of yellow sand it is impossible to detect a single fossil, while in other places they occur in profusion.

Blocks of Apennine limestone are found in this formation drilled by lithodomous shells. The remains not only of testacea and corals, but of fishes and crabs, are met with, as also those of cetacea, and even of terrestrial quadrupeds.

A considerable list of the mammiferous species has been given by Brocchi and some other writers; and, although several mistakes have been made, and some bones of cetacea have been confounded with those of land animals, it is still indubitable that some remains of land animals were carried down into the sea when the Subapennine sand and marl accumulated. The same causes which drifted skeletons into lakes, such as that of the upper Val d'Arno, may have carried down others into firths or bays of the sea. The femur of an elephant has been disinterred with oysters attached to it, showing that it remained for some time exposed after it was drifted into the sea.

Strata at the base of the Maritime Alps.—If we pass from the Italian peninsula, and, following the borders of the Mediterranean, examine the tertiary strata at the foot of the Maritime Alps, we find formations agreeing in zoological characters with the Subapennine beds, and presenting many points of analogy in their mineral composition. The Alps, it is well known, terminate abruptly in the sea, between Genoa and Nice, and the steep declivities of that bold coast are continued below the waters; so that a depth of many hundred fathoms is often found within stone's-throw of the beach. Exceptions occur only where streams and torrents enter the sea; and at these points there is always a low level tract, intervening between the mouth of the stream and the precipitous escarpment of the mountains.

In travelling from France to Genoa, by the new coast road, we are

conveyed principally along a ledge excavated out of a steep slope or precipice, in the same manner as on the roads which traverse the great interior passes of the Alps, such as the Simplon and Mont Cenis; the difference being that, in this case, the traveller has always the sea below him, instead of a river. But we are obliged occasionally to descend by a zigzag course into those low plains before alluded to, which, when viewed from above, have the appearance of bays deserted by the sea. They are surrounded on three sides by rocky eminences, and the fourth is open to the sea.

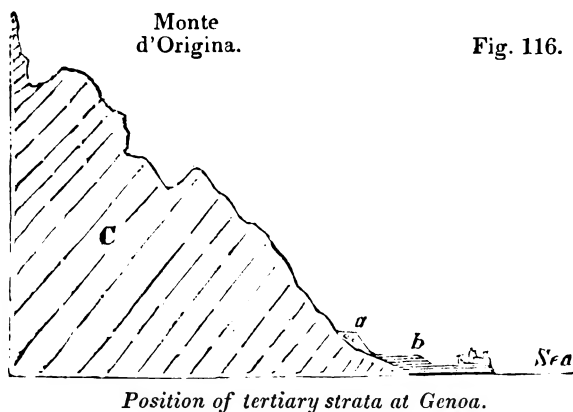
These leading features in the physical geography of the country are intimately connected with its geological structure. The rocks composing the Alpine declivities belong partly to the primary formations, but more generally to the secondary, and have undergone immense disturbance; but when we examine the low tracts before mentioned, we find the surface covered with great beds of gravel and sand, such as are now annually brought down by torrents and streams in the winter, and which are spread in such quantity over the wide and shifting river-channels as to render the roads for a season impassable. The first idea which naturally suggests itself, on viewing these plains, is to imagine them to be deltas or spaces converted into land by the accumulated sand and gravel brought down from the Alps by rivers. But, on closer inspection, we find that the apparent lowness of the plains, which at first glance might be supposed to be only just raised above the level of the sea, is a deception produced by contrast. The Alps rise suddenly to the height of several thousand feet with a bold and precipitous outline; while the country below is composed of horizontal strata, which have either a flat or gently undulating surface. The strata consist of gravel, sand, and marl, filled with marine shells, and they are considerably elevated, attaining sometimes the height of two hundred feet, or even more, above the level of the sea; there must, therefore, have been a rise of the coast since they were deposited, and they are not mere deltas or spaces reclaimed from the sea by rivers. Why, then, are such strata found only at the points where rivers enter?

We must imagine that, after the coast had nearly acquired its present configuration, the streams which flowed down into the Mediterranean produced shoals opposite their mouths by the continual drifting in of gravel, sand, and mud. The Alps have since been raised to a sufficient height to cause these shoals to become land; while the corresponding elevation of the intervening parts of the coast, where the sea was of great depth near the shore, has not been perceptible.

The disturbing force appears to have acted very irregularly, and to have produced the least elevation towards the eastern extremity of the Maritime Alps, and a greater amount as we proceed westward. Thus we find the marine tertiary strata attaining the height of about 100 feet at Genoa,

200 and 300 feet farther westward at Albenga, and 800 or 900 feet in the neighbourhood of Nice.

Genoa.—At Genoa the tertiary strata consist of blue marls like those of the northern Subapennines, and contain the same shells. On the



a. Ancient sea-beach.

b. Blue marl with shells.

C. Inclined secondary strata of sandstone, shale, &c.

immediate site of the town they rise to the height of only twenty feet above the sea; but they reach about eighty feet in some parts of the suburbs. At the base of a mountain not far from the suburbs there is an ancient beach, strewed with rounded blocks of Alpine rocks, some of which are drilled by the *Modiola lithophaga*, Lamk., the whole cemented into a conglomerate, which marks the ancient sea-beach at the height of 100 feet above the present sea.*

Savona.—At Savona, proceeding westwards, we find deposits of blue marl like those of Genoa, and occupying a corresponding geological position at the base of the mountains near the sea. The shells, collected from these marls by Mr. Murchison and myself, in 1828, were examined by Signor Bonelli, of Turin, and found to agree with Subapennine fossils.

Albenga.—At Albenga these formations occupy a more extensive tract, forming the plains around that town and the low hills of the neighbourhood, which reach in some spots an elevation of 300 feet. The encircling mountains recalled to my mind those which bound the plain and bay of Palermo, and other bays of the Mediterranean, which are surrounded by bold rocky coasts.

The general resemblance of the Albenga strata to the Subapennine beds is very striking; the lowest division consisting of blue marl which is covered by sand and yellow clay, and the highest by a mass of stratified

* I have here to acknowledge my obligations to Professor Viviani, and Dr. Sasso, who called my attention to these phenomena when I visited Genoa in Jan. 1829.

shingle, sometimes consolidated into a conglomerate. Dr. Sasso has collected about 200 species of shells from these beds; and it appears, by his catalogue, that they agree, for the most part, with the northern Subapennine fossils, more than half of them belonging to recent species.*

Nice.—At Nice the tertiary strata are upraised to a much greater height, but they may still be said to lie at the base of the Alps which tower above them. Here, also, they consist principally of blue marl and yellow sand, which appear to have been deposited in submarine valleys previously existing in the inclined secondary strata. In one district, a few miles to the west of Nice, the tertiary beds are almost exclusively composed of conglomerate, from the point of their junction with the secondary strata to the sea.

The river Magnan flows in a deep valley, which terminates at its upper extremity in a narrow ravine. Nearly vertical precipices are laid open on each side, varying from 200 to 600 feet in height, and composed of inclined beds of shingle, sometimes separated by layers of sand, and more rarely by blue micaceous marl. The pebbles in these stratified shingles agree in composition with those now brought down from the Alps by the Var and other rivers on this coast.

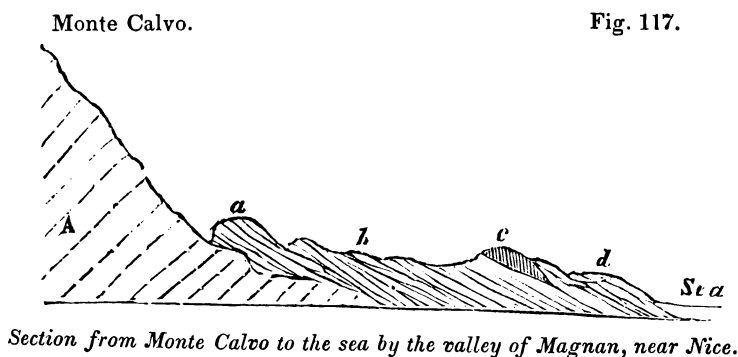
The dip of these strata is remarkably uniform, being always southwards, or towards the Mediterranean, at an angle of about 25°. I examined this section in company with Mr. Murchison in the summer of 1828, when the bed of the river was dried up. The geologist has then a good opportunity of examining a section of the strata, as the channel crosses for many miles the line of bearing of the beds, which may be traced to the base of Monte Calvo, a distance of about nine miles in a straight line from the Mediterranean. It is usually impossible to determine the exact age of such accumulations of sand and gravel, in consequence of the total absence of organic remains. Their non-existence may depend chiefly on the disturbed state of the waters, where great beds of shingle are formed, which are known to prevent testacea and fishes from living in Alpine torrents; partly on the total destruction of shells by the same friction which rounded the pebbles; and partly on the permeability of the matrix to water, which may carry away the elements of the decomposing fossil body, without substituting any other substance in their place which might retain a cast of their form.

But it fortunately happens, in this instance, that in some few seams of loamy marl, intervening between the pebble-beds, and near the middle of the section, shells have been preserved in a very perfect state; and these may furnish a zoological date to the whole mass. The principal of these interstratified masses of loam occurs near the church of St. Madeleine (at *c*, Fig. 117, p. 311), where the active researches of M.

* *Giornale Ligustico*, Genoa, 1827.

Risso have brought to light a great number of shells which agree perfectly with the species found in much greater abundance at a spot called *La Trinità*, and some other places nearer Nice. From these fossils it clearly appears that the formation belongs to the Older Pliocene era.

Such alternations of gravel with the usual thin layers of fine sediment may easily be explained, if we reflect that the rivers now flowing from the Maritime Alps are nearly dried up in summer, and have only strength to drift along fine mud to the sea; whereas in winter, or on the melting of the snow, they roll along large quantities of pebbles. The thicker masses of loam, such as that of *St. Madeleine*, may have been produced during a longer interval, when the river shifted for a time the direction of its principal channel of discharge; so that nothing but fine mud was for a series of years conveyed to that point in the bed of the sea opposite the delta.



- A. Dolomite and sandstone. (Green-sand formation?)
- a, b, d. Beds of gravel and sand.
- c. Fine marl and sand of *St. Madeleine*.

Uniform and continuous as the strata appear, on a general view, in the ravine of the Magnan, we discover, if we attempt to trace any one of them for some distance, that they thin out and are wedge-shaped. We believe that they were thrown down originally upon a steep slanting bank or talus, which advanced gradually from the base of Monte Calvo to the sea. The distance between these points is, as before mentioned, about nine miles; so that the accumulation of superimposed strata would be a great many miles in thickness, if they were placed horizontally upon one another. The strata nearest to Monte Calvo, which may be expressed by *a*, are certainly older than those of *b*, and the group *b* was formed before *c*. The aggregate thickness, in any one place, cannot be proved to amount to 1000 feet, although it may, perhaps, be much greater. But it may never exceed 3000 or 4000 feet; whereas, if we did not suppose that the beds were originally deposited in an inclined position, we should be forced to imagine that a sea, many miles in depth, had been filled up by a horizontal strata of pebbles thrown down one upon another.

At no great distance on this coast the Var is annually seen to sweep down into the sea a large quantity of gravel, which may be spread out by the waves and currents over a considerable space. The sea at the mouth of this river is now shallow, but it may originally have been 3000 feet deep, as it is now close to the shore at Nice. Here, therefore, a formation resembling that of the Magnan above described may be in progress.

In confirmation of the above reasoning, I may refer to the modern delta of the river Kander in the lake of Thun in Switzerland. The Kander formerly ran parallel to that lake, until it was artificially turned into it about the year 1713, when the government of Berne caused two parallel subterranean galleries or tunnels to be excavated through the land which separated the course of the river from the lake; a distance of nearly a mile. The Kander, on being admitted, shot with the violence of a Swiss torrent through the tunnels, burst the arches of the galleries, and formed a ravine, which is now open to the day, about fifty feet in depth. A large quantity of mud and rock was swept into the lake, and an alluvial tract was formed of a semicircular shape, which now extends for a mile along the original shore, and projects about a quarter of that distance into the lake. Its annual advance is said to amount to several yards,* and the delta terminates in a talus, the slope of which is inclined at angles varying between 15° and 25° . Such was the result of my own observations, in 1836, when I sounded the lake opposite the mouth of the Kander. The greatest inclination which I found gave an angle of 29° , the least 6° .† It follows, therefore, that the strata have successively accumulated on a plane thus highly inclined; so that, if the Lake of Thun, which is 600 feet deep,‡ beyond the recently formed shoal, were drained, a vertical section might be laid open, 600 feet in height, in which strata would be seen having a considerable dip like those of the Magnan, although they had remained undisturbed from the period of their original deposition.

Tertiary Strata at the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees.—I shall conclude this chapter with one more example, derived from a region not far distant. On the borders of the Mediterranean, at the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees, in the south of France, a considerable thickness of tertiary strata is seen in the valleys of the rivers Tech, Tet, and Gly. They bear much resemblance to those already described, consisting partly of a large proportion of conglomerate, and partly of clay and sand, with sub-

* Rev. J. Yates, on Alluvium, Edin. New Phil. Journ. 1834.

† Lord Cole and the Rev. Mr. Egerton measured the dip in 1833, and concluded that it was still more considerable (Proceedings of Geol. Soc. 1834.); but they tell me that they had not sufficient time or implements to insure accuracy in their soundings.

‡ Mr. Yates, *ibid.*

ordinate beds of lignite. They abut against the primary formation of the Pyrenees, which here consists of mica-schist. Between Ceret and Boulon these tertiary strata are seen inclined at an angle of between 20° and 30° . The shells which I procured from several localities were recognised by M. Deshayes as agreeing with Subapennine fossils.

Spain—Morea.—It appears, from the recent observations of Colonel Silvertop, that marine strata of the Older Pliocene period occur in patches at Malaga, and in Grenada in Spain. They have also been discovered by MM. Boblaye and Virlet in the Morea.

CHAPTER XIII.

OLDER PLIOCENE FORMATIONS—CRAG.

Crag of Norfolk and Suffolk—Appears by its fossil contents to belong to the Older Pliocene period—Divisible into coralline and red crag—Superincumbent deposits—Forms of stratification (p. 317.)—Oblique layers—Cause of this arrangement—Dislocations in the strata produced by subterranean movements overlaying the shelly crag—Protruded masses of chalk (p. 322.)—Similar appearances in the Cliffs of Mœn in Denmark.

THE Older Pliocene strata, described in the last chapter, are all situated in countries bordering the Mediterranean; but there is a group in our own island, probably belonging to the same era, which I shall now consider. I have already alluded to this deposit under the provincial name of crag,* and pointed out its superposition to the London clay, a tertiary formation of much higher antiquity.† The crag is chiefly developed in the eastern parts of Norfolk and Suffolk, from whence it extends into Essex.

Its relative age.—A collection of the shells of the “crag” beds, which I formed in 1829, together with a much larger number sent me by my friend Mr. Mantell, of Brighton, were carefully examined by M. Deshayes, and compared with the tertiary species in his cabinet. More than half of these were considered by him to be of extinct species, not agreeing in general with the fossils of Touraine or other Miocene deposits. The remainder were of recent species, and considered to be identical with testacea now living in the German Ocean. For these reasons it was inferred

* Ante, p. 205.

† See Fig. 84., ante, p. 206.

that the crag was older than the Miocene period, and about as far removed in conchological character from the shells of our seas, as are the Subapennine strata from the shells now inhabiting the Mediterranean. Out of 111 species examined in Paris in 1829, sixty-six were regarded as extinct, and forty-five as recent;* and when I lately submitted to the inspection of M. Deshayes sixty other species, procured from the lowest or coralline crag, he still retained the same opinion in regard to the proportion of recent species. A larger number, however, of organic remains has of late years been obtained from the crag, principally by Mr. Wood of Hasketon, in Suffolk, who states that he has in his collection, exclusive of Polypi, Radiaria, and Crustacea, no less than 450 species of invertebrated animals from the crag, among which there are of annulata 13, cirrhipeda 11, conchifera 189, mollusca 257.

But these fossils have not yet been examined with sufficient attention to enable me to say, whether the results to which they lead should modify the conclusions previously deduced from more limited data.†

From the labours of Mr. Charlesworth, it appears that the crag may be divided into two distinct masses, one of which may be termed the lower or "coralline crag," and the other the "red crag." The lower division is composed of calcareous sand, chiefly derived from decomposed corals, in which are imbedded shells, corals, and sponges, in a good state of preservation, and which must evidently have lived on the spot.

This coralline formation is often without distinct stratification, and in some places forms a soft stone used in building: it is said to attain a thickness of more than 50 feet at Orford, and was not pierced through even at that depth. The coralline crag rests immediately on the London clay, and may be studied at several places in Suffolk, as at Tatingstone, Ramsholt, Sudburn Park, Orford, and Aldborough.

* M. Deshayes is now aware that he was mistaken in supposing one of these crag fossils, *Voluta Lamberti*, to be identical with a recent species.

† Dr. Beck, of Copenhagen, well known for his profound knowledge of recent shells, has lately seen 260 species of crag shells in Mr. Charlesworth's cabinet in London, and informs me, that although a large proportion of the species approach very near to others which now live in our northern seas, he regards them as almost all of distinct species, and not recent. I attribute this discordance of opinion between the Danish naturalist and M. Deshayes, chiefly to the different estimate which they have formed of the amount of variation necessary to constitute a distinct species. It seems natural that those who, like M. Deshayes, have been long engaged in the study of fossils, should require a more enlarged conception of the modifications which time and circumstances may produce in species, even though they reject the Lamarckian doctrine of transmutation. This subject, however, requires a thorough re-examination, as respects the crag fossils. Mr. Milne Edwards tells me that he has seen a small number of corals or polypifera from the crag, none of which are, in his opinion, recent. On the other hand, Dr. Fleming, as I mentioned in a former edition, considers the *Eschara retiformis*, and several other zoophytes of this formation, as perfectly identical with living species. Both M. Deshayes and Dr. Beck agree in pronouncing the crag shells to be those of a northern climate.

The red crag is distinguished from the coralline, upon which it lies in some places unconformably, by the deep red ferruginous or ochreous colour of its sands and fossils. It consists in great part of numerous layers of siliceous sand containing shells, which are usually broken and worn. Among these are many of the genera *Buccinum* and *Fusus*, which have never been met with in the coralline crag.

Some have imagined the red crag to consist in great measure of transported materials derived from the breaking up of the coralline crag; but I can fully confirm the observation of Mr. R. E. Taylor and others, that this deposit has been gradually formed, as may be inferred from stratification, and from the fact of certain shells occurring at intervals in groups and genera, and being by no means diffused everywhere, nor scattered at random, through the beds.

Another question has also arisen respecting the coralline and the red crag, namely, whether both of them belong to the same tertiary period. Of the fossil shells in Mr. Wood's collection, 235 species are said to have been procured from the red crag, and 353 from the coralline beds, and out of these 150 species are common to the two divisions. Mr. Charlesworth suggests that, even of these 150 species, many may have belonged originally to the lower bed, and have been washed into the newer one, in the same manner as some fossil shells of the chalk have certainly been imbedded in the crag, and as crag shells are now daily washed into the sea on our coast, and mixed with recent shells. But, although such accidental mixtures have doubtless occurred, I see no sufficient reason at present for believing that the two divisions of the crag should be referred to distinct tertiary periods. It is not disputed that many fossils are truly common to both divisions of the crag, and equally abundant in each. The remarkable want of correspondence in the genera of shells, and even in some other classes and families of organic remains, characteristic of each division, affords by no means a strong argument in favour of a wide difference in epoch. It is said that there are few indications of fish in the coralline crag; whereas in the red crag, the teeth and bones of fish of the genera *Carcharias*, *Myliobates*, *Galeus*, *Lamna*, *Notidanus*, and *Platax*, are found abundantly. So also it is remarked that mammalian remains, as those of the Elephant, Horse, and others, are chiefly confined to the upper or red crag, whereas corallines and other zoophytes, as also microscopic foraminifera (of which Mr. Wood has obtained fifty species), belong almost exclusively to the lower or coralline division.*

Now these distinctions are precisely of a kind which would depend on differences of a local rather than a chronological nature. Thus in one part of the sea we may suppose a region, where the water is deep and

* Charlesworth, *Phil. Mag.*, June, 1836, vol. viii. p. 535.

tranquil, to be favourable to the growth of corals, sponges, echini and microscopic cephalopods, such as characterize the lower crag ; whilst in another and somewhat shallower region, where currents prevailed, and to which sand and shingle were often drifted, no zoophytes might exist, although certain kinds of testacea abounded. According to this hypothesis, a certain space where the coralline crag was first formed might afterwards have been converted into a shallower sea, or exposed to the action of waves and currents, so as to become the receptacle of deposits like the red crag.

It is only when we can compare fossils of the same class, as shells with shells, corals with corals, and fish with fish, and when we find that a large proportion of the species thus compared are dissimilar, that we can refer two groups of strata to different *periods*.

There may nevertheless have been a long interval of time, and some amount of change in the marine fauna, between the times of the deposition of the lower and upper crag ; for when we adopt only four tertiary periods, as proposed in this work, the number of ages probably comprised in any one of them, as for instance in the Older Pliocene, may be indefinitely great.

The shelly beds of Norfolk appear to belong exclusively to the red crag ; but on the northern limits of that county they are said to be occasionally covered by a still newer stratum, containing exclusively species now living in the adjoining sea. This is doubtless the marine formation described by Mr. Phillips as occurring throughout Holderness, in Yorkshire.* According to this view, the succession of tertiary formations, in following our eastern coast from the estuary of the Thames to that of the Humber, will be, first, in Essex, the Eocene or London clay ; secondly, in Suffolk, the coralline crag, probably belonging to the Older Pliocene period ; next, the red crag of Suffolk and Norfolk, also of the same era ; and lastly, on the extreme northern boundary of Norfolk and in Holderness, a marine Newer Pliocene deposit.

Superimposed upon the fossiliferous crag in the cliffs of Norfolk and Suffolk, is a formation of much greater thickness, and of more uncertain age. It has been sometimes classed with the crag and sometimes distinguished from it under the name of diluvium. A large portion of it is regularly stratified, but other parts consist of a confused heap of mud and rubbish entirely without stratification, and containing fragments of various rocks, some derived from the oolitic series with their characteristic fossils, others from the chalk and London clay, together with granitic and other pebbles transported from a great distance. In some places this formation consists of sand and shingle in alternate beds destitute of organic remains, and of considerable thickness, as in the Suffolk cliffs between Dunwich and

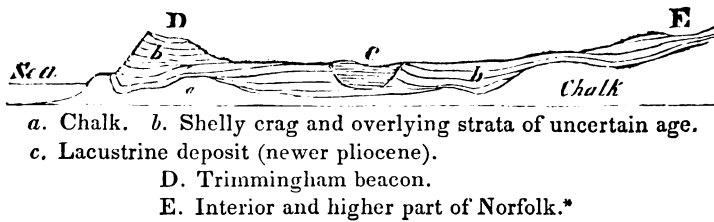
* See Phillips's Geol. of Yorkshire.

Yarmouth. Elsewhere it is composed of blue or brown marl, sand, loam, and clay, containing bones of terrestrial quadrupeds with drift wood and beds of lignite.

Above this deposit of uncertain age, are occasional patches of lacustrine strata, filling up small cavities which must have once been lakes or ponds on the surface of the country, and in which strata of loam and peat accumulated, including recent freshwater testacea.

The annexed section may give a general idea of the manner in which

Fig. 118.



the crag and the superimposed gravel, sand, and marl rest on the chalk as we pass from the Norfolk cliffs, at Trimmingham, into the interior, where the country rises gradually.

The outline of the surface of the subjacent chalk, in this section, is imaginary, but is such as might explain the relations of those protruded masses of chalk, three of which appear in the cliffs near Trimmingham, and which some geologists have too hastily assumed to be unconnected with the great mass of chalk below. I shall treat of these presently, when describing the disturbances which the tertiary strata of the Norfolk cliffs have suffered since their original deposition.

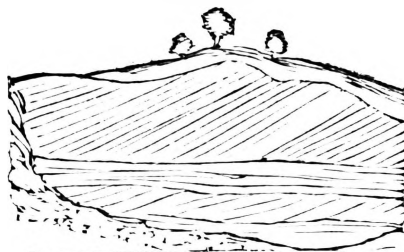
In the interior, at E, there is a thick covering of sand and gravel upon the chalk, having the characters of an alluvium, but which seems to pass gradually into the regular strata of sand, shingle, and loam before described as covering the shelly crag.

Forms of stratification.—In almost every formation the individual strata are rarely persistent for a great distance, the superior and inferior planes being seldom precisely parallel to each other; and if the materials are very coarse, the beds often thin out if we trace them for a few hundred yards. There are also many cases where all the layers are oblique to the general direction of the strata, and the crag affords most interesting illustrations of this phenomenon.

In the sea-cliff near Walton, in Suffolk, opposite the Martello Tower, called *a*, the section represented in the annexed diagram is seen (Fig. 119.). The vertical height is about twenty feet, and the beds of crag consist alternately of sets of inclined and horizontal layers of sand and comminuted

* This section is compiled principally from one by Mr. Murchison; the others in this chapter are from sketches which I made in 1829.

Fig. 119.

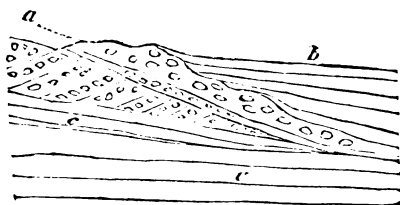
*Section of shelly crag near Walton, Suffolk.*

shells. The sand is siliceous, and of a ferruginous colour; but the layers are sometimes made up of small plates of bivalve shells, arranged with their flat sides parallel to the plane of each layer, like mica in micaceous sandstones.

The number of laminæ in the thickness of an inch, both in the siliceous and shelly sand, varies from seven to ten, so that it is impossible to express them all in the diagram. The height of the uppermost stratum, is, in this instance, remarkable, as it extends to twelve feet. The inclination of the laminæ is about 30° ; but in the cliffs of Bawdesey, to the eastward, they are sometimes inclined at an angle of 45° , and even more.

This diagonal arrangement of the layers, sometimes called "*false stratification*," is not confined to deposits of fine sand and comminuted shells; for we find beds of shingle disposed in the same manner, as is seen in the annexed section (Fig. 120.).

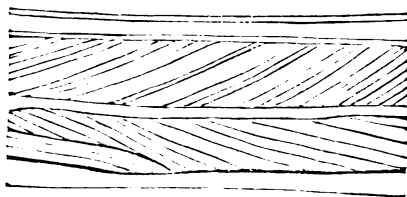
Fig. 120.

*Section at the Lighthouse near Happisborough. Height sixteen feet.*

- a.* Pebbles of chalk flint, and of rolled pieces of white chalk.
b. Loam overlying *a.* *c, c.* Blue and brown clay.

The direction of the dip of the inclined layers, throughout the Suffolk coast, is so uniformly to the south, that I only saw two or three instances of a contrary nature, where the inclination was northerly. One of the best examples of this variation is exhibited in a cliff between Mismar and Dunwich (Fig. 121.). In this case, there are about six layers in the thickness of an inch, and the part of the cliff represented is about six feet high.

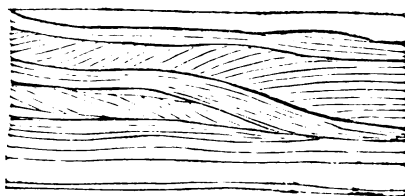
Fig. 121.



Section of part of Little Cat cliff, composed of quartzose sand, showing the inclination of the layers in opposite directions.

Another example may be seen near Walton, where the layers, which are of extreme tenuity, consist of ferruginous sand, brown loam, and comminuted shells. It is not uncommon to find in this manner sets of perfectly horizontal strata resting upon and covered by groups of wavy and transverse layers.

Fig. 122.

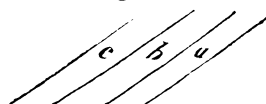


Lamination of shelly sand and loam, near the Signal-house, Walton. Vertical height four feet.

The appearances exhibited in the diagrams are not peculiar to the crag: they may be found in almost every gravel-pit; and I have seen sand and pebble-beds of all ages, including the old red sandstone, greywacké, and clay-slate, exhibit the same arrangement.

If we now inquire into the causes of such a disposition of the materials of each bed or group of layers, it may, in the first place, be remarked,

Fig. 123.



that, however numerous may be the successive layers *a*, *b*, *c*, the layer *a* must have been deposited before *b*, *b* before *c*, and so of the rest.

We must suppose that each thin seam was thrown down on a slope, and that it conformed itself to the side of the steep bank, just as we see the materials of a talus arrange themselves at the foot of a cliff when they have been cast down successively from above. If the transverse layers are cut off by a nearly horizontal line, as in many of the above sections, it may arise from the denuding action of a wave which has carried away the upper portion of a submarine bank, and truncated the layers of which it was composed. But I do not conceive this hypothesis to be necessary; for if a bank have a steep side, it may grow by the successive apposition of thin strata thrown down upon

its slanting side, and the removal of matter from the top may proceed simultaneously with its lateral extension. The same current may borrow from the top what it gives to the sides ; a mode of formation which I had lately an opportunity of observing on the rippled surface of the hills of blown sand near Calais. The undulating ridges and intervening furrows on the dunes of blown sand resembled exactly in form those caused by the waves on a sea beach, and were always at right angles to the direction of the wind which had produced them. Each ridge had one side slightly inclined, and the other steep ; the lee side being always steep, as *b, c, d, e* ; the windward side a gentle slope, as *a, b, c, d*. When a gust blew

Fig. 124.



with sufficient force to drive along a cloud of sand, all the ridges were seen to be in motion at once, each encroaching on the furrow before it, and, in the course of a few minutes, filling the place which the furrows had occupied. Many grains of sand were drifted along the slopes *a b* and *c d*, which, when they fell over the scarps *b c* and *d e*, were under shelter from the wind ; so that they remained stationary, resting, according to their shape and momentum, on different parts of the descent. In this manner each ridge was distinctly seen to move slowly on as often as the force of the wind augmented. We shall not strain analogy too far, by supposing that, in such cases, the same laws may govern subaqueous and subaërial phenomena ; and if so, we may imagine a submarine bank to be nothing more than one of the ridges of ripple on a larger scale, which may increase in the manner before suggested, by successive additions to the steep carps.

The set of tides and currents, in opposite directions, may account for sudden variations in the direction of the dip of the layers, as represented in Fig. 124 ; while the general prevalence of a southerly inclination in the the crag of Suffolk may indicate that the matter was brought by a current from the north.

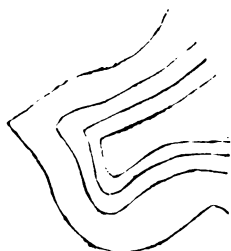
I may refer to a drawing given in the first volume,* to show the analogy of the arrangement of the submarine strata, just considered, to that exhibited by deposits formed in the channels of rivers where a considerable transportation of sediment is in progress.

Derangement of strata.—In the above examples I have explained the want of parallelism or horizontality in the subordinate layers of different strata, by reference to the mode of their original deposition ; but there are signs of disturbance which can only be accounted for by subsequent movements. The same blue and brown clay, or loam, which is often

* Page 236. Fig. 13.

perfectly horizontal, and as regularly bedded as any of our older formations, is, in other places, curved and even folded back upon itself, in the manner represented in the annexed diagrams.

Fig. 125.



*Bent strata of loam in the cliffs
between Cromer and Runton.*

Fig. 126.



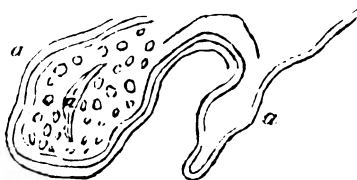
*Folding of the strata between East and
West Runton.*

In the last of these cuts a central nucleus of sand is surrounded by argillaceous and sandy layers. This phenomenon is very frequent; and there are instances where the materials thus enveloped consist of broken flints mingled with pieces of chalk, forming a white mass, encircled by dark laminated clay. The diameter of these included masses, as seen in sections laid open in the sea cliffs, varies from five to fifteen feet.

East of Sherringham, a heap of partially-rounded flints, about five feet in diameter, is nearly enveloped by finely laminated strata of sand and loam, and some of the loam is entangled in the midst of the flints.

In this and similar instances, we may imagine the yielding strata, *a*, to

Fig. 127.



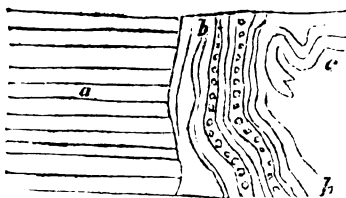
Section in the Cliffs east of Sherringham.

a. Sand and loam in thin layers.

have subsided into a cavity, and the flints belonging to a superincumbent bed to have pressed down with their weight, so as to cause the strata to fold round them.

That some masses of stratified sand and loam have actually sunk down into cavities, or have fallen like landslips into ravines, seems indicated by other appearances. Thus, near Sherringham, the argillaceous beds, *a*, represented in the annexed diagram (Fig. 128. p. 322), are cut off abruptly, and succeeded by the vertical and contorted series *b*, *c*. The face of the cliff here represented is twenty-four feet in height. Some of the layers in *b*, *b*, are composed of pebbles, and these alternate with thin

Fig. 128.



Section east of Sherringham, Norfolk.

a. Sand, loam, and blue clay.

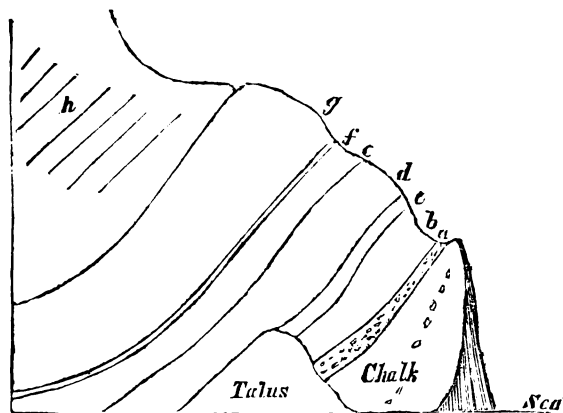
b, b. Sand and gravel.

c. Twisted beds of loam.

beds of loose sand. The whole set must once have been horizontal, and must have moved in a mass, or the relative position of the several parts would not have been preserved. Similar appearances may, perhaps, be produced when chasms open during earthquakes, and portions of yielding strata fall in from above and are engulfed.

Protruded masses of chalk.—But whatever opinion we may entertain on this point, we cannot doubt that subterranean movements have given rise to some of the local derangements of this formation, particularly where masses of solid chalk pierce, as it were, through the tertiary strata. Thus, between Mundesley and Trimmingham we see the appearances exhibited in the accompanying view (Fig. 129.). The chalk, of which

Fig. 129.



Side view of a promontory of chalk and tertiary strata, Trimmingham, Norfolk.

a. Gravel and ferruginous sand, rounded and angular pieces of chalk flint, with some quartz pebbles, 3 feet.

b. Laminated blue clay, 8 feet.

c. Yellow sand, 1 foot, 6 inches.

d. Dark blue clay, with fragments of marine shells, 6 feet.

e. Yellow loam and flint gravel, 3 feet.

f. Light blue clay, 1 foot.

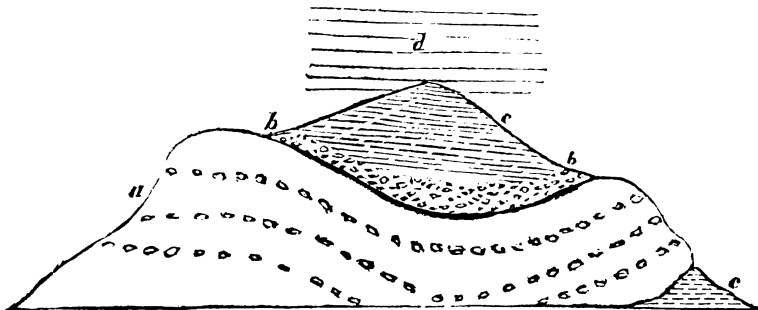
g. Sand and loam, 12 feet.

h. Yellow and white sand, loam, and gravel, about 100.

the strata are highly inclined, or vertical, projects in a promontory, because it offers more resistance to the action of the waves than the tertiary beds which, on both sides, constitute the whole of the cliff. The height of the soft strata immediately above the chalk is, in this place, about 130 feet. Those which are in contact (see the wood-cut) are inclined at an angle of 45° , and appear more disturbed than in other parts of the cliffs, as if they had been displaced by the movement by which the chalk was protruded.

Very similar appearances are exhibited by the northernmost of the three protuberances of chalk, of which a front view is given in the annexed diagram. It occupies a space of about one hundred yards along the shore,

Fig. 130.

*Northern protuberance of chalk, Trimmingham.*

- a. Chalk with flints.
- b. Gravel of broken and half-rounded flints.
- c. Laminated blue clay.
- d. Sand and yellow loam.

and projects about sixty yards in advance of the general line of cliff. One of its edges, at c, rests upon the blue clay beds, in such a manner as to imply that the mass had been undermined when the clay was deposited, unless we suppose, as some have done, that this chalk is a great detached mass enveloped by tertiary strata. For, as one of the "Needles," or insulated rocks of chalk, which stood 120 feet above high-water mark, at the western extremity of the Isle of Wight, fell into the sea in 1772,* so a pinnacle of chalk may have been precipitated into the tertiary sea, at a point where some beds of clay had previously accumulated. The strata of chalk with flint in the above diagram appear nearly horizontal; but they are in fact highly inclined inwards towards the cliff, and it is quite evident that the chalk and overlying deposit have both been subjected to the same movement, and have been violently disturbed.

Since I first published my observations on these phenomena, I have visited Denmark, and seen similar appearances, but on a much grander scale, in the cliffs of the island of Møen. The white chalk with flints,

* Dodsley's Annual Register, vol. xv. p. 140.

which there forms cliffs from 300 to 400 feet high, is covered with tertiary sand, clay, and loam, exactly resembling in form, colour, and mineralogical character, the deposit overlying the crag of Norfolk. The chalk in Möen exhibits curved, vertical, and shifted strata, upon the whole more deranged than those of Purbeck or the Isle of Wight. They have been so fissured and dislocated, that large masses of overlying clay and sand have subsided bodily into large chasms, intersecting the chalk to the depth of several hundred feet. Some of these intercalations and intermixtures of tertiary clay and sand with chalk can only be explained by supposing engulfments of superincumbent matter, such as are known to have occurred during modern earthquakes.

I have stated that the Danish tertiary deposit resembles that of uncertain age, which rests upon the crag in Norfolk and Suffolk. The correspondence extends not merely to the nature of the clay, sand, gravel, and mud, but to many other peculiarities. Thus in Denmark, especially in Holstein, as seen in sections on the banks of the Elbe, we find in some places a total absence of stratification, while masses in immediate contact are regularly divided into thin layers of sand and loam extending to the thickness of several hundred feet. In Denmark also, as in Norfolk, we find here and there the wreck of many secondary formations included in the newer deposit, especially chalk, together with some pebbles of granite, porphyry, and other rocks. Organic remains are rare in Denmark, except those derived from older strata, and hence the age of the formation is on the whole very doubtful; but it has been supposed by Dr. Forchhammer and Dr. Beck to have been in progress throughout more than one tertiary period. Be this as it may, it is ascertained that one portion of it is extremely modern, and belongs to the latest part of the Newer Pliocene period, containing shells identical with those now living in the German Ocean. Whether the beds of the Norfolk cliffs which, together with the chalk, have been so much disturbed, are of equally modern date, or belong rather to a more remote part of the great Pliocene epoch, is a point which we cannot yet determine; and indeed we cannot hope to solve this problem, until we have compared more attentively the newer tertiary strata of Denmark, and the south of Sweden, with those of the eastern coast of England.

CHAPTER XIV.

VOLCANIC ROCKS OF THE OLDER PLIOCENE PERIOD.

Igneous rocks of this period in Italy—Volcanic region of Olot, in Catalonia—Lava currents—Ravines—Ancient alluvium—Jets of air called “Bufadors” (p. 330.)—Age of the Catalonian volcanos uncertain—Earthquake of Olot in 1421—Sardinian volcanos—District of the Eifel and Lower Rhine—Peculiar characteristics of the Eifel volcanos—Lake craters (p. 334.)—Trass—Age of the Eifel volcanic rocks how far uncertain (p. 337.)—Brown coal formation.

Italy.—It is part of my proposed plan to consider the igneous as well as the aqueous formations of each period; but I am far from being able as yet to assign to each of the numerous groups of volcanic origin scattered over Europe a precise place in the chronological series. It has been already stated, that the volcanic rocks of Tuscany belong, in part at least, to the Older Pliocene period,—those, for example, of Radicofani, Viterbo, and Aquapendente, which have been chiefly erupted beneath the sea. The same observation would probably hold true in regard to the igneous rocks of the Campagna di Roma.

But several other districts, of which the dates are still uncertain, may be mentioned in this chapter as being possibly referable to the period now under consideration. It will at least be useful to explain the points which require elucidation before the exact age of the groups about to be described can be accurately determined.

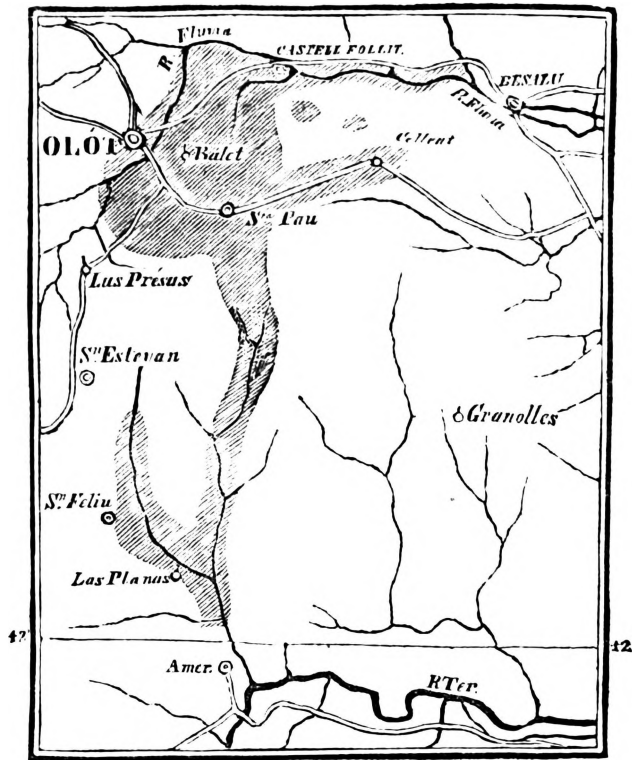
Volcanos of Olot, in Catalonia.—I shall first describe a district of extinct volcanos in the north of Spain, which is little known, and which I visited in the summer of 1830.

The whole extent of country occupied by volcanic products in Catalonia is not more than fifteen geographical miles from north to south, and about six from east to west. The vents of eruption range entirely within a narrow band running north and south; and the branches, which are represented as extending eastward in the map, are formed simply of two lava-streams—those of Castell Follit and Cellent.

Dr. Maclure, the American geologist, was the first who made known the existence of these volcanos;* and, according to his description, the volcanic region extended over twenty square leagues, from Amer to Massanet. I searched in vain in the environs of Massanet, in the Pyrenees, for traces of a lava-current; and I can say with confidence, that the adjoining map gives a correct view of the true area of the volcanic action.

* Maclure, Journ. de Phys., vol. lxvi. p. 219, 1808; cited by Daubeny, Description of Volcanos, p. 24.

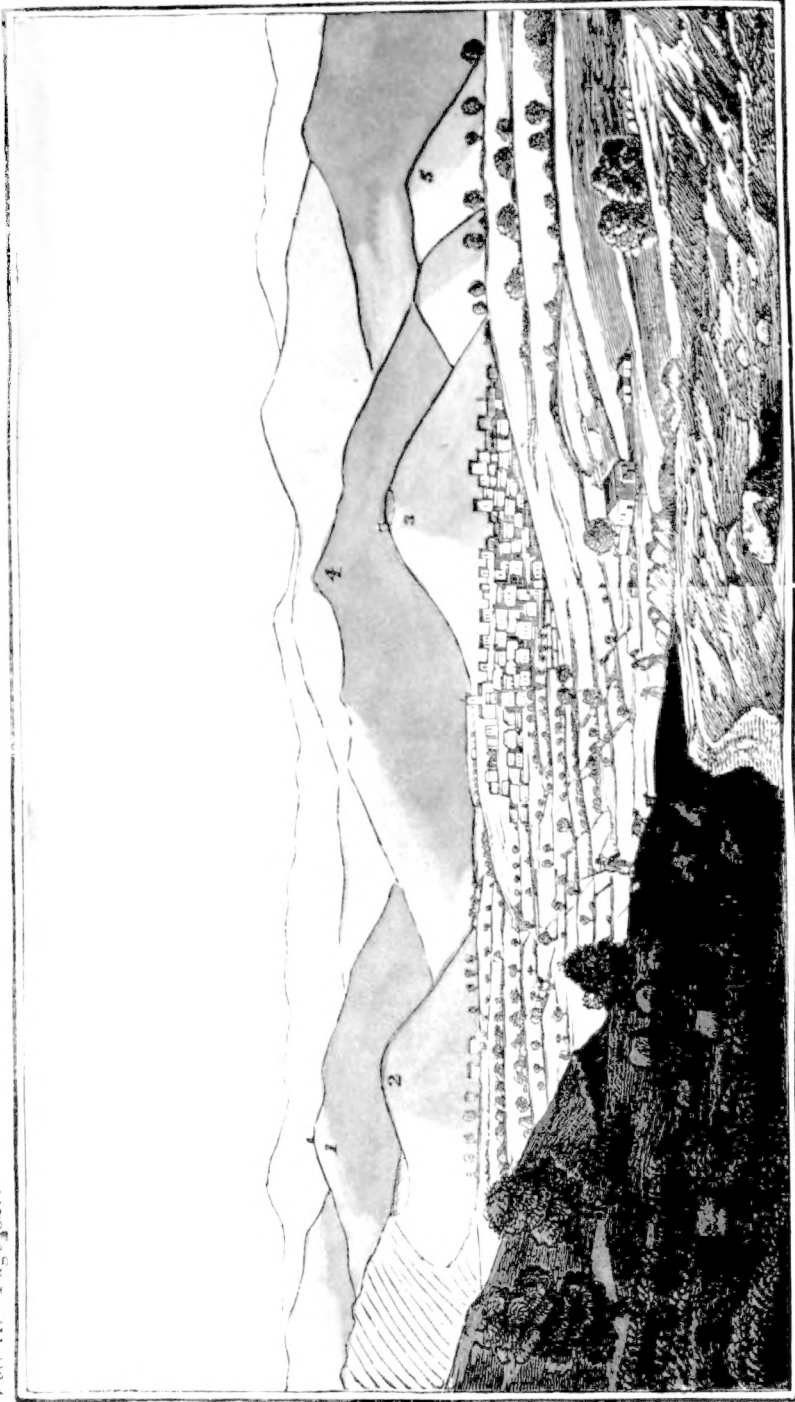
Fig. 131.

*Volcanic district of Catalonia.*

Geological structure of the district.—The eruptions have burst entirely through secondary rocks, composed in great part of gray and greenish sandstone and conglomerate, with some thick beds of nummulitic limestone. The conglomerate contains pebbles of quartz, limestone, and Lydian stone. The limestone is not only replete with nummulites, but occasionally includes oysters, pectens, and other shells. This system of rocks is very extensively spread throughout Catalonia; one of its members being a red sandstone, to which the celebrated salt-rock of Cardona is subordinate. It is conjectured that the whole belongs to the age of our green-sand and chalk.

Near Amer, in the valley of the Ter, on the southern borders of the region delineated in the map, primary rocks are seen consisting of gneiss, mica-schist, and clay-slate. They run in a line nearly parallel to the Pyrenees, and throw off the secondary strata from their flanks, causing them to dip to the north and north-west. This dip, which is towards the Pyrenees, is connected with a distinct axis of elevation, and prevails through the whole area described in the map, the inclination of the beds being sometimes at an angle of between 40 and 50 degrees.

It is evident that the physical geography of the country has undergone



- 1. *St. Michel.*
- 2. *Monte Olietto.*
- 3. *Montsacopa.*
- 4. *Puig Sacourona.*
- 5. *Garrinada.*

VIEW OF THE VOLCANOS AROUND OLOT, IN CATALONIA.

- 1. Primary and secondary rocks of Pyrenees.
- 2. Secondary formations.
- 3. Volcanic Rocks.

no material change since the commencement of the era of the volcanic eruptions, except such as has resulted from the introduction of new hills of scorix, and currents of lava upon the surface. If the lavas could be remelted and poured out again from their respective craters, they would descend the same valleys in which they are now seen, and re-occupy the spaces which they at present fill. The only difference in the external configuration of the fresh lavas would consist in this, that they would nowhere be intersected by ravines, or exhibit marks of erosion by running water.

Volcanic cones and lavas.—There are about fourteen distinct cones with craters in this part of Spain, besides several points whence lavas may have issued; all of them arranged along a narrow line running north and south, as will be seen in the map. The greatest number of perfect cones are in the immediate neighbourhood of Olot, some of which are represented in the annexed plate (Pl. XI.); and the level plain on which that town stands has clearly been produced by the flowing down of many lava-streams from those hills into the bottom of a valley, probably once of considerable depth, like those of the surrounding country.

In this plate an attempt is made to represent by colours the different geological formations of which the country is composed.* The blue line of mountains in the distance are the Pyrenees, which are to the north of the spectator, and consist of primary and ancient secondary rocks. In front of these are the secondary formations described in this chapter, coloured gray. Different shades of this colour are introduced, to express various distances. The flank of the hill, in the foreground, called Costa de Pujou, is composed partly of secondary rocks, and partly of volcanic, the red colour expressing lava and scorix.

The Fluvia, which flows near the town of Olot, has cut to the depth of only 40 feet through the lavas of the plain before mentioned. The bed of the river is hard basalt; and at the bridge of Santa Madalena are seen two distinct lava-currents, one above the other, separated by a horizontal bed of scorix eight feet thick.

In one place to the south of Olot, the even surface of the plain is broken by a mound of lava, called the “Bosque de Tosca,” the upper part of which is scoriaceous, and covered with enormous heaps of fragments of basalt more or less porous. Between the numerous hummocks thus formed are deep cavities, having the appearance of small craters. The whole precisely resembles some of the modern currents of Etna, or that of Côme, near Clermont; the last of which, like the Bosque de Tosca, supports only a scanty vegetation.

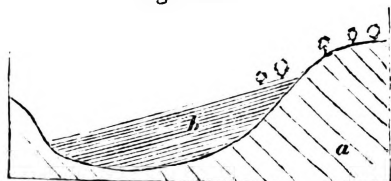
Most of the Catalonian volcanos are as entire as those in the neighbourhood of Naples, or on the flanks of Etna. One of these, figured in the

* This view is taken from a sketch which I made on the spot in 1830.

plate, called Montsacopa, is of a very regular form, and has a circular depression or crater at the summit. It is chiefly made up of red scoriæ, undistinguishable from that of the minor cones of Etna. The neighbouring hills of Olivet and Garrinada, also figured in the plate, are of similar composition and shape. The largest crater of the whole district occurs farther to the east of Olot, and is called Santa Margarita. It is 455 feet deep, and about a mile in circumference. Like Astroni, near Naples, it is richly covered with wood, wherein game of various kinds abounds.

Although the volcanos of Catalonia have broken out through sandstone, shale, and limestone, as have those of the Eifel, in Germany, to be described in the sequel, there is a remarkable difference in the nature of the ejections composing the cones in these two regions. In the Eifel, the quantity of pieces of sandstone and shale thrown out from the vents is often so immense as far to exceed in volume the scoriæ, pumice, and lava; but I sought in vain in the cones near Olot for a single fragment of any extraneous rock; and Don Francisco Bolos, an eminent botanist of Olot, informs me that he has never been able to detect any. Volcanic sand and ashes are not confined to the cones, but have been sometimes scattered by the wind over the country, and drifted into narrow valleys, as is seen between Olot and Cellent, where the annexed section is exposed. The light cindery volcanic matter rests in thin regular layers, just as it alighted on the slope formed by the solid conglomerate. No flood could have passed through the valley since the scoriæ fell, or these would have been for the most part removed.

Fig. 132.

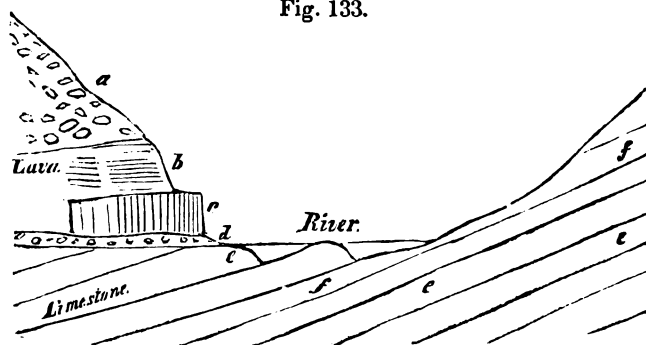


a. Secondary conglomerate.

b. Thin seams of volcanic sand and scoriæ.

The currents of lava in Catalonia, like those of Auvergne, the Vivarais, Iceland, and all mountainous countries, are of considerable depth in narrow defiles, but spread out into comparatively thin sheets in places where the valleys widen. If a river has flowed on nearly level ground, as in the great plain near Olot, the water has only excavated a channel of slight depth; but where the declivity is great, the stream has cut a deep section, sometimes by penetrating directly through the central part of a lava-current, but more frequently by passing between the lava and the secondary rock which bounds the valley. Thus in the accompanying section, at the bridge of Cellent, six miles east of Olot, we see the lava on one side of the small stream; while the inclined stratified rocks constitute the channel and opposite bank. The upper part of the lava at that place, as is usual in the currents of Etna and Vesuvius, is scoriaceous;

Fig. 133.



Section above the bridge of Cellent.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| a. Scoriaceous lava. | d. Scoriæ, vegetable soil, and alluvium. |
| b. Schistose basalt. | e. Nummulitic limestone. |
| c. Columnar basalt. | f. Micaceous gray sandstone. |

farther down it becomes less porous, and assumes a spheroidal structure; still lower it divides in horizontal plates, each about two inches in thickness, and is more compact. Lastly, at the bottom is a mass of prismatic basalt about five feet thick. The vertical columns often rest immediately on the subjacent secondary rocks; but there is sometimes an intervention of such sand and scoriæ as cover the country during volcanic eruptions, and which when unprotected, as here, by superincumbent lava, is washed away from the surface of the land. Sometimes, the bed *d* contains a few pebbles and angular fragments of rock; in other places fine earth, which may have constituted an ancient vegetable soil.

In several localities, beds of sand and ashes are interposed between the lava and subjacent stratified rock, as may be seen if we follow the course of the lava-current which descends from Las Planas towards Amer, and stops two miles short of that town. The river there has often cut through the lava, and through eighteen feet of underlying limestone. Occasionally an alluvium, several feet thick, is interspersed between the igneous and marine formation; and it is interesting to remark that in this, as in other beds of pebbles occupying a similar position, there are no rounded fragments of lava, whereas in the most modern gravel beds of rivers of this country, volcanic pebbles are abundant.

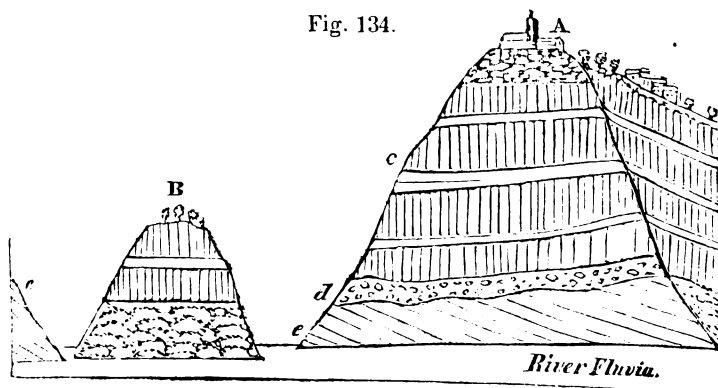
The deepest excavation made by a river through lava, which I observed in this part of Spain, is that seen in the bottom of a valley near San Felu de Palleróls, opposite the Castell de Stollès. The lava there has filled up the bottom of a valley, and a narrow ravine has been cut through it to the depth of one hundred feet. In the lower part the lava has a columnar structure. A great number of ages were probably required for the erosion of so deep a ravine; but we have no reason to infer that this current is of higher antiquity than those of the plain near Olot. The fall of

the ground, and consequent velocity of the stream, being in this case greater, a more considerable volume of rock may have been removed in the same time.

I shall describe one more section to elucidate the phenomena of this district. A lava-stream, flowing from a ridge of hills on the east of Olot, descends a considerable slope, until it reaches the valley of the river Fluvia. Here, for the first time, it comes in contact with running water, which has removed a portion, and laid open its internal structure in a precipice about 130 feet in height, at the edge of which stands the town of Castell Follit.

By the junction of the rivers Fluvia and Teronel the mass of lava has been cut away on two sides; and the insular rock B (Fig. 134.) has been left, which was probably never so high as the cliff A, as it may have constituted the lower part of the sloping side of the original current.

From an examination of the vertical cliffs, it appears that the upper part of the lava on which the town is built is scoriaceous, passing downwards into a spheroidal basalt; some of the huge spheroids being no less than six feet in diameter. Below this is a more compact basalt with crystals of olivine. There are in all about four distinct ranges of prismatic basalt, separated by thinner beds not columnar, and some of which are schistose. The whole mass rests on alluvium, ten or twelve feet in thickness, composed of pebbles of limestone and quartz, but without any intermixture of igneous rocks; in which circumstance alone it appears to differ from the modern gravel of the Fluvia.



Section at Castell Follit.

- A. Church and town of Castell Follit, overlooking precipices of basalt.
- B. Small island, on each side of which branches of the river Teronel flow to meet the Fluvia.
- c. Precipice of basaltic lava, chiefly columnar, about 130 feet in height.
- d. Ancient alluvium underlying the lava-current.
- e. Inclined strata of secondary sandstone.

Bufadors.—The volcanic rocks near Olot have often a cavernous structure, like some of the lavas of Etna; and in many parts of the hill of Batet,

in the environs of the town, the sound returned by the earth, when struck, is like that of an archway. At the base of the same hill are the mouths of several subterranean caverns, about twelve in number, which are called in the country "bufadors," from which a current of cold air issues during summer, but which in winter is said to be scarcely perceptible. I visited one of these bufadors in the beginning of August, 1830, when the heat of the season was unusually intense, and found a cold wind blowing from it, which may easily be explained; for as the external air, when rarefied by heat, ascends, the pressure of the colder and heavier air of the caverns in the interior of the mountain causes it to rush out to supply its place.

Age of the Catalonian volcanos uncertain.—It now only remains to offer some remarks on the probable age of these Spanish volcanos. Attempts have been made to prove, that in this country, as well as in Auvergne and the Eifel, the earliest inhabitants were eye-witnesses to the volcanic action. In the year 1421, it is said, when Olot was destroyed by an earthquake, an eruption broke out near Amer, and consumed the town. The researches of Don Francisco Bolos have, I think, shown, in the most satisfactory manner, that there is no good historical foundation for the latter part of this story; and any geologist who has visited Amer must be convinced that there never was any eruption on that spot. It is true that, in the year above mentioned, the whole of Olot, with the exception of a single house, was cast down by an earthquake; one of those shocks which, at distant intervals during the last five centuries, have shaken the Pyrenees, and particularly the country between Perpignan and Olot, where the movements, at the period alluded to, were most violent.

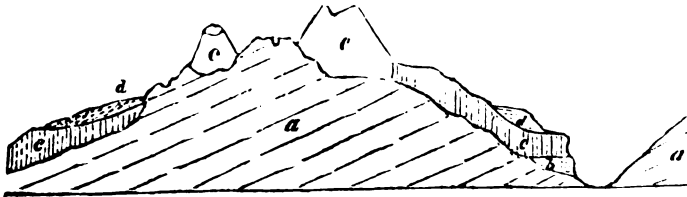
Some houses are said to have sunk into the earth; and this account has been corroborated by the fact that, within the memory of persons now living, the buried arches of a Benedictine monastery were found at the depth of six feet beneath the surface; and still later, some houses were dug out in the street called Aigua. Don Bolos informed me, that he was present when the latter excavation was made, and when the roof of a buried house was found nearly entire; the interior of the building being in a great part empty, so that it was necessary to fill it up with earth and stones, in order to form a sure foundation for the new edifice.

The annihilation of the ancient Olot may, perhaps, be ascribed, not to the extraordinary violence of the movement on that spot, but to the cavernous nature of the subjacent rocks; for Catalonia is beyond the line of those European earthquakes which have, within the period of history, destroyed towns throughout extensive areas.

As we have no historical records, then, to guide us in regard to the extinct volcanos, we must appeal to geological monuments. I have little doubt that some fossil land-shells, and bones of quadrupeds, will hereafter reward the industry of collectors. If such remains are found imbedded

in volcanic ejections, the period of the eruptions may be inferred; but at present we have no evidence beyond that afforded by superposition, in regard to which the annexed diagram will present to the reader, in a synoptical form, the results obtained from numerous sections.

Fig. 135.



Superposition of rocks in the volcanic district of Catalonia.

- a.* Sandstone and nummulitic limestone.
- b.* Older alluvium without volcanic pebbles.
- c.* Cones of scorise and lava.
- d.* Newer alluvium.

The more modern alluvium, *d*, is partial, and has been formed by the action of rivers and floods upon the lava; whereas the older gravel *b*, was strewed over the country before the volcanic eruptions. In neither have any organic remains been discovered; so that we can merely affirm, as yet, that the volcanos broke out after the elevation of some of the newest rocks of the secondary series, and before the formation of an alluvium, *d*, of unknown date. The integrity of the cones merely shows that the country has not been agitated by violent earthquakes, or subjected to the action of any great transient flood since their origin.

East of Olot, on the Catalonian coast, marine tertiary strata occur, which, near Barcelona, attain the height of about five hundred feet. It appears probable, from a small number of shells which I collected, that these strata may correspond with the Subapennine beds; so that if the volcanic district had extended thus far, we might be able to determine the age of the igneous products, by observing their relation to these Older Pliocene formations.*

Sardinian volcanos.—The line of extinct volcanos in Sardinia, described by Captain Smyth,† is also of uncertain date, as, notwithstanding the freshness of some of the cones and lavas, they may be of high antiquity. They rest, however, on a tertiary formation, supposed by some to correspond to the Subapennine strata, but of which the fossil remains have not been fully described.

Volcanic rocks of the Eifel.—The volcanos of the Lower Rhine and

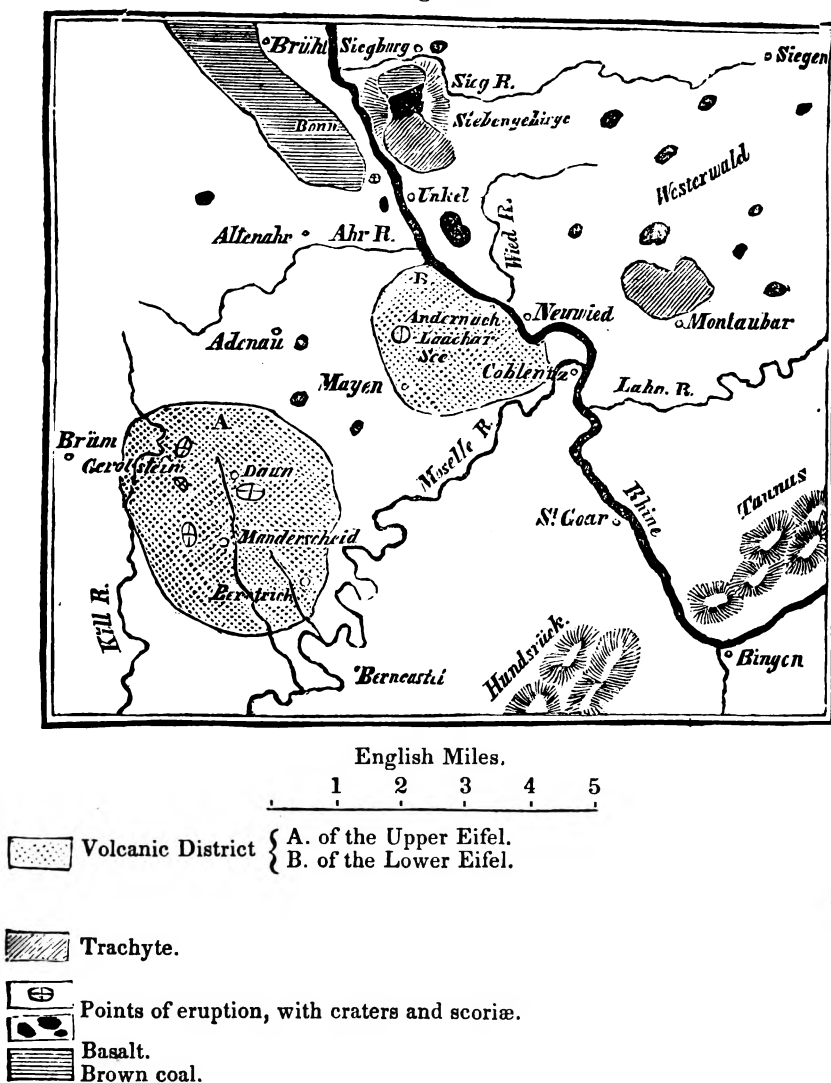
* For some account of the Olot volcanos, see "Noticià de los Estinguidos Volcanes de la Villa de Olot," by Francisco Bolos. Barcelona. No date; but the observations, I am told, preceded those of Dr. Maclure.

† Present State of Sardinia, &c., pp. 69, 70.

the Eifel are, for the most part, of no less uncertain date than those of Catalonia; but I am desirous of pointing out some of their peculiar characters, and shall, therefore, treat of them in this chapter, trusting that future investigations will determine their chronological relations more accurately.

For the geographical details of this volcanic region the reader is referred to the annexed map (Fig. 136.), for which I am indebted to Mr. Horner, whose residence in the country has enabled him to verify the maps of

Fig. 136.



N.B. The country in that part of the map which is left blank is almost entirely composed of greywacké.

MM. Noeggerath and Von Oeynhausén, from which that now given has been principally compiled.

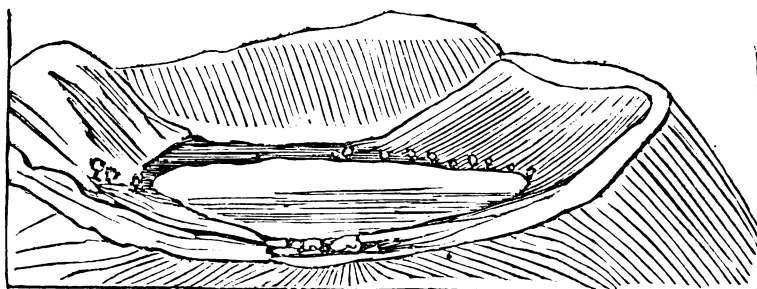
There has been a long succession of eruptions in this country, and some of them must have occurred when its physical geography was in a very different state, while others have happened when the whole district had nearly assumed its present configuration.

The fundamental rock of the Eifel is an ancient secondary sandstone and shale, to which the obscure and vague appellation of "greywacké" has been given. The formation has precisely the characters of a great part of those gray and red sandstones and shales, which are called "old red sandstone" in England and Scotland, where they constitute the inferior member of the carboniferous series. In the Eifel they occupy the same geological position, and in some parts alternate with a limestone, containing trilobites and other fossils of our "mountain" and "transition" limestones. The strata are inclined at all angles, from the horizontal to the vertical, and must have undergone reiterated convulsions before the country was moulded into its present form.

Lake-craters.—The volcanos have broken out sometimes at the bottom of deep valleys, sometimes on the summit of hills, and frequently on intervening platforms. The traveller often falls upon them unexpectedly in a district otherwise extremely barren of geological interest. Thus, for example, he might arrive at the village of Gemund, immediately south of Daun, without suspecting that he was in the immediate vicinity of some of the most remarkable vents of eruption. Leaving a stream, which flows at the bottom of a deep valley in a sandstone country, he climbs the steep acclivity of a hill, where he observes the edges of strata of sandstone and shale dipping inwards towards the mountain. When he has ascended to a considerable height, he sees fragments of scoriæ sparingly scattered over the surface; till at length, on reaching the summit, he finds himself suddenly on the edge of a *tarn*, or deep circular lake-basin.

This, which is called the Gemunder Maar, is the first of three lakes

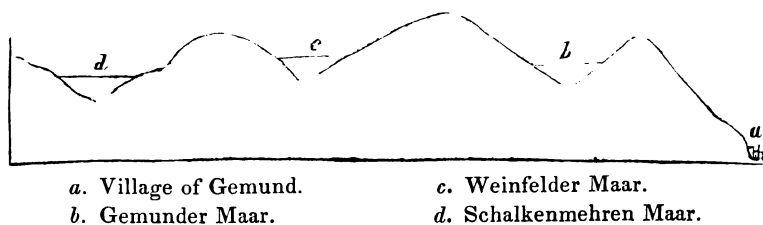
Fig. 137.



The Gemunder Maar.

which are in immediate contact, the same ridge forming the barrier of two neighbouring cavities (see Fig. 137.). On viewing the first of these we recognise the ordinary form of a crater, for which we have been prepared by the occurrence of scoriæ scattered over the surface of the soil. But on examining the walls of the crater, we find precipices of sandstone and shale which exhibit no signs of the action of heat; and we look in vain for those beds of lava and scoriæ, dipping in opposite directions on every side, which we have been accustomed to consider as characteristic of volcanic craters. As we proceed, however, to the opposite side of the lake, and afterwards visit the craters *c* and *d* (Fig. 138.), we find a considerable quantity of scoriæ and some lava, and see the whole surface of

Fig. 138.



the soil sparkling with volcanic sand, and strewed with ejected fragments of half-fused shale, which preserves its laminated texture in the interior, while it has a vitrified or scoriform coating.

A few miles to the south of the lakes above mentioned occurs the Pulvermaar of Gillenfeld, an oval lake of very regular form, and surrounded by an unbroken ridge of fragmentary materials, consisting of ejected shale and sandstone, and preserving a uniform height of about 150 feet above the water. The side slope in the interior is at an angle of about forty-five degrees; on the exterior, of thirty-five degrees. Volcanic substances are intermixed very sparingly with the ejections, which in this place entirely conceal from view the stratified rocks of the country.*

The Meerfelder Maar is a cavity of far greater size and depth, hollowed out of similar strata; the sides presenting some abrupt sections of inclined secondary rocks, which in other places are buried under vast heaps of pulverized shale. I could discover no scoriæ amongst the ejected materials, but balls of olivine and other volcanic substances are mentioned as having been found.† This cavity, which we must suppose to have discharged an immense volume of gas, is nearly a mile in diameter, and is said to be more than one hundred fathoms deep. In the neighbourhood is a mountain called the Mosenberg, which consist of red sandstone and shale in its lower parts, but supports on its summit a triple volcanic cone,

* Scrope, Edin. Journ. of Sci., June, 1826, p. 145.

† Hibbert, Extinct Volcanos of the Rhine, p. 24.

while a distinct current of lava is seen descending the flanks of the mountain. The edge of the crater of the largest cone reminded me much of the form and characters of that of Vesuvius.

If we pass from the Upper to the Lower Eifel, we find the celebrated lake-crater of Laach, which has a greater resemblance than any of those before mentioned to the Lago di Bolsena, and others in Italy—being surrounded by a ridge of gently sloping hills, composed of loose tuffs, scorix, and blocks of a variety of lavas.

One of the most interesting volcanos on the left bank of the Rhine is called the Roderberg. It forms a circular crater nearly a quarter of a mile in diameter, and one hundred feet deep, now covered with fields of corn. The highly inclined greywacké strata rise even to the rim of one side of the crater; but they are overspread by quartzose gravel, and this again is covered by volcanic scorix and tufaceous sand. The opposite wall of the crater is composed of cinders and scorified rock, like that at the summit of Vesuvius. It is quite evident that the eruption in this case burst through the greywacké and alluvium which immediately overlies it; and I observed some of the quartz pebbles mixed with scorix on the flanks of the mountain, as if they had been cast up into the air, and had fallen again with the volcanic ashes.

I have already observed, that a large part of this crater has been filled up with loess, and I have pointed out how far we may thus obtain a relative date for the period of its eruption.*

The most striking peculiarity of a great many of the craters above described, is the absence of any signs of alteration or torrefaction in their walls, when these are composed of regular strata of greywacké-sandstone and shale. It is evident that the summits of hills formed of the above-mentioned stratified rocks have, in some cases, been carried away by gaseous explosions, while at the same time no lava, and often a very small quantity only of scorix, has escaped from the newly formed cavity. There is, indeed, no feature in the Eifel volcanos more worthy of note, than the proofs they afford of very copious æriform discharges, unaccompanied by the pouring out of melted matter, except, here and there, in very insignificant volume. I have seen no assemblage of extinct volcanos in France, Italy, or Spain, where gaseous explosions of such magnitude have been attended by the emission of so small a quantity of lava. Yet I looked in vain in the Eifel for any appearances which could lend support to the hypothesis, that the sudden rushing out of such enormous volumes of gas had ever lifted up the stratified rocks immediately around the vent, so as to form conical masses, having their strata dipping outwards on all sides from a central axis. In the Gemunder Maar the beds, as before stated, have an inward dip on one side of the hill; and in the

* Ante, p. 292.

walls of this and other craters, there are strata which are inclined at all angles, just as may be observed in the greywacké, far from the points of eruption. Those who favour the theory of the elevation crater might naturally expect, that in a district where so many tremendous explosions have occurred, they would find masses of greywacké towering several thousand feet above the surrounding platform, whereas the height of these ancient rocks has not been visibly affected by the sites of the extinct volcanos.*

Trass and its origin.—It appears that in the Lower Eifel eruptions of trachytic lava preceded the emission of currents of basalt, and that immense quantities of pumice were thrown out wherever trachyte issued. In this district, also, we find the tufaceous alluvium of the Rhine volcanos called *trass*, which has covered large areas, and choked up some valleys now partially re-excavated. This trass is unstratified; and its base consists almost entirely of pumice, in which are included fragments of basalt and other lavas, pieces of burnt shale, slate, and sandstone, and numerous trunks and branches of trees.

We may easily conceive the manner of its origin, if we reflect on what would happen if an eruption, attended by a copious evolution of gases, should now occur in one of the lake basins. The water might remain for weeks in a state of violent ebullition, until it became of the consistency of mud, just as the sea continued to be charged with red mud round Graham's Island, in the Mediterranean, in the year 1831.† If a beach should then be made in the side of the cone, the flood would sweep away great heaps of ejected fragments of shale and sandstone, which would be borne down into the adjoining valleys. Forests might be torn up by such a flood; and thus the occurrence of the numerous trunks of trees dispersed irregularly through the trass, can be explained.

Age of the volcanic rocks.—It will be seen by the map (Fig. 136. p. 333), that the volcanic rocks extend also to the opposite or right bank of the Rhine, where they are spread over parts of the Westerwald, and form the great mass of the mountains called the Siebengebirge. They consist partly of basaltic and partly of trachytic lavas, the latter description being, in general, the more ancient of the two. There are many varieties of trachyte, some of which are highly crystalline, resembling a coarse-grained granite, with large separate crystals of felspar. Trachytic tuff is also very abundant. It is a difficult task to determine the age of all these igneous rocks, although their position, relatively to the stratified formations with which they are associated, has been clearly made out. The accompanying table presents in a synoptical view the series of rocks of the district delineated in the map (Fig. 136. p. 333).

* See Vol. I. p. 357.

† See Vol. I. p. 353.

a. Volcanic.	}	A. Newer Pliocene.
b. Loess.		
c. Gravel.		
b. Loess.		
a. Volcanic.	}	B. Tertiary—of uncertain periods, but older than A.
d. Volcanic.		
e. Gravel.		
f. Brown coal.		
g. Volcanic.		
f. Brown coal.		
Greywacké. C.		

It will be seen that the greywacké C, before alluded to (p. 334), is the lowest rock of the series, which is usually in highly inclined strata; upon this reposes a nearly horizontal tertiary formation *f*, which has been called "brown coal." This deposit consists of beds of loose sand and sandstone, clay with nodules of clay-ironstone, and siliceous conglomerate. Beds of light brown and sometimes black lignite, of various thickness, are interstratified with the clays and sands, and often irregularly diffused through them. They are extensively worked for fuel, and hence the name given to the whole formation: they contain numerous impressions of leaves and stems of trees. In several places layers of trachytic tuff are interstratified, and in these tuffs are leaves of plants identical with those found in the brown coal, showing that, during the period of the accumulation of the latter, some volcanic products (*g*) were ejected.

A vast deposit of gravel, *e*, chiefly composed of pebbles of white quartz, but containing also a few fragments of other rocks, lies over the brown coal formation, forming sometimes only a thin covering, at others attaining a thickness of more than 100 feet. This gravel is very distinct in character from that now forming the bed of the Rhine. It is called "Kiesel gerolle" by the Germans, often reaches great elevations, and is covered in several places with volcanic ejections. It is evident that the country has undergone great changes in its physical geography since this gravel was formed, whereas no inconsiderable proportion of the volcanic rocks, *d*, were produced after the country had nearly attained its present configuration.

The aqueous and igneous formations above enumerated, constituting the group B, may be declared to be tertiary, from the character of the organic remains of the brown coal *f*; for they are seen to be either of the same age as *f*, or newer, and the members of the group A have been shown to be so intimately connected with the loess,* that we may, without hesitation, declare them to belong to the Newer Pliocene period. It should be recollected, however, that the whole series A only forms, in

* See ante, pp. 290, 291.

the aggregate, a very insignificant feature in the district, and the great mass of the volcanic products, *d*, may, possibly, belong to the Older Pliocene, or some still more remote era.

The varieties of wood found in the brown coal strata are said to belong entirely to dicotyledonous trees; but among the impressions of leaves, collected by Mr. Horner, some were referred by Mr. Lindley to a palm, perhaps of the genus *Chamærops*, and others resembled the *Cinnamomum dulce*, and *Podocarpus macrophylla*, which would also indicate a warm climate.*

The other organic remains of the brown coal are principally fishes; they are found in a bituminous shale, called paper-coal, from being divisible into extremely thin leaves. The individuals are extremely numerous; but they appear to belong to about five species, which M. Agassiz informs me are all extinct, and hitherto peculiar to this brown coal. They belong to the freshwater genera *Leuciscus*, *Aspius*, and *Perca*. The remains of frogs also, of an extinct species, have been discovered in the paper-coal; and a complete series may be seen in the museum at Bonn, from the most imperfect state of the tadpole to that of the fullgrown animal. With these a salamander, scarcely distinguishable from the recent species, has been found, and several remains of insects.

The brown coal was evidently a freshwater formation; but the extreme rarity of shells renders it difficult to form any conjecture as to the subdivision of the tertiary period to which it may belong. Near Marienforst, in the vicinity of Bonn, large blocks are found of a white opaque chert, containing numerous casts of freshwater shells, which appear to belong to *Planorbis rotundatus* and *Limnea longiscata*, two species common both to the Eocene and Miocene periods, but which have not been found in any newer deposits. M. Deshayes, to whom I showed the specimens, said he felt as confident of the above identifications as *mere casts* would warrant. These blocks of chert are not *in situ*, but they probably belong to the brown coal formation, of which the hills at Marienforst consist. The brown coal is well known to contain, at other places, subordinate beds of silex. It is to be hoped, that a comparison of the organic remains of the brown coal with those of the tertiary formation of Mayence, which appears to be of Miocene date, will throw some light on the chronological relations of the igneous and freshwater formations above considered.†

* Trans. of Geol. Soc., 2d ser. vol. v.

† For fuller details consult Noeggerath's *Rheinland Westphalen*, *Memoirs of Von Dechen*, *Oeynhausens*, and *Von Buch*, *Steininger* (erloschenen Vulkane in der Eifel, &c., Mainz, 1820), *Van der Wyck* (Uebersicht der Rheinischen und Eifeler erlosch. Vulkane, Bonn. 1826), *Scrope* (*Edin. Journ. of Sci.* 1826, p. 145), *Daubeny* (*Volcanos*, p. 45), *Leonhard* (*Ueber Basalt-Gebilde*), *Hibbert* (*Extinct. Volcs. of Rhine*), and the Memoir above cited by Mr. Horner, in the *Trans. of Geol. Soc.*, vol. v. 2d ser.

CHAPTER XV.

MIOCENE FORMATIONS—MARINE.

Miocene period—Marine formations—Faluns of Touraine—compared to the English crag—Basin of the Gironde and Landes—Freshwater limestone at Saucats (p. 344.)—Eocene strata in the Bordeaux basin.—Position of the limestone of Blaye—Inland cliff near Dax—Montpellier—Strata of Piedmont—Superga—Valley of the Bormida—Molasse of Switzerland (p. 348.)—Basin of Vienna—Styria—Hungary—Volhynia and Podolia—Mayence.

HAVING treated in the preceding chapters of the Older and Newer Pliocene formations, I shall next consider those members of the tertiary series for which I have proposed the name of Miocene. The distinguishing characters of this group, as derived from its imbedded fossil testacea, have been explained in the fifth chapter.* In regard to the relative *position* of the strata, they underlie the Older Pliocene, and overlie the Eocene, formations, when any of these happen to be present.

The area covered by the marine, freshwater, and volcanic rocks of the Miocene period, in different parts of Europe, can already be proved to be very considerable; for they occur in Touraine, in the basin of the Loire, and still more extensively in the South of France, between the Pyrences and the Gironde. They have also been observed in Piedmont near Turin, and in the neighbouring valley of the Bormida, where the Apennines branch off from the Alps. They are largely developed in the neighbourhood of Vienna and Styria; they abound in parts of Hungary; and they overspread extensive tracts in Volhynia and Podolia.

Shells characteristic of the Miocene strata are found in all these countries, figures of some of which are given in Plate XII., the species here selected abounding in almost all the deposits of this era, and not occurring in any Eocene or Pliocene formations. *Cardita Ajar*, however, is also a recent species, but has been admitted on account of its abundance in Miocene strata, and because it has never yet been observed in any *Pliocene* deposit, and is confined in a living state to tropical countries, as Senegal.

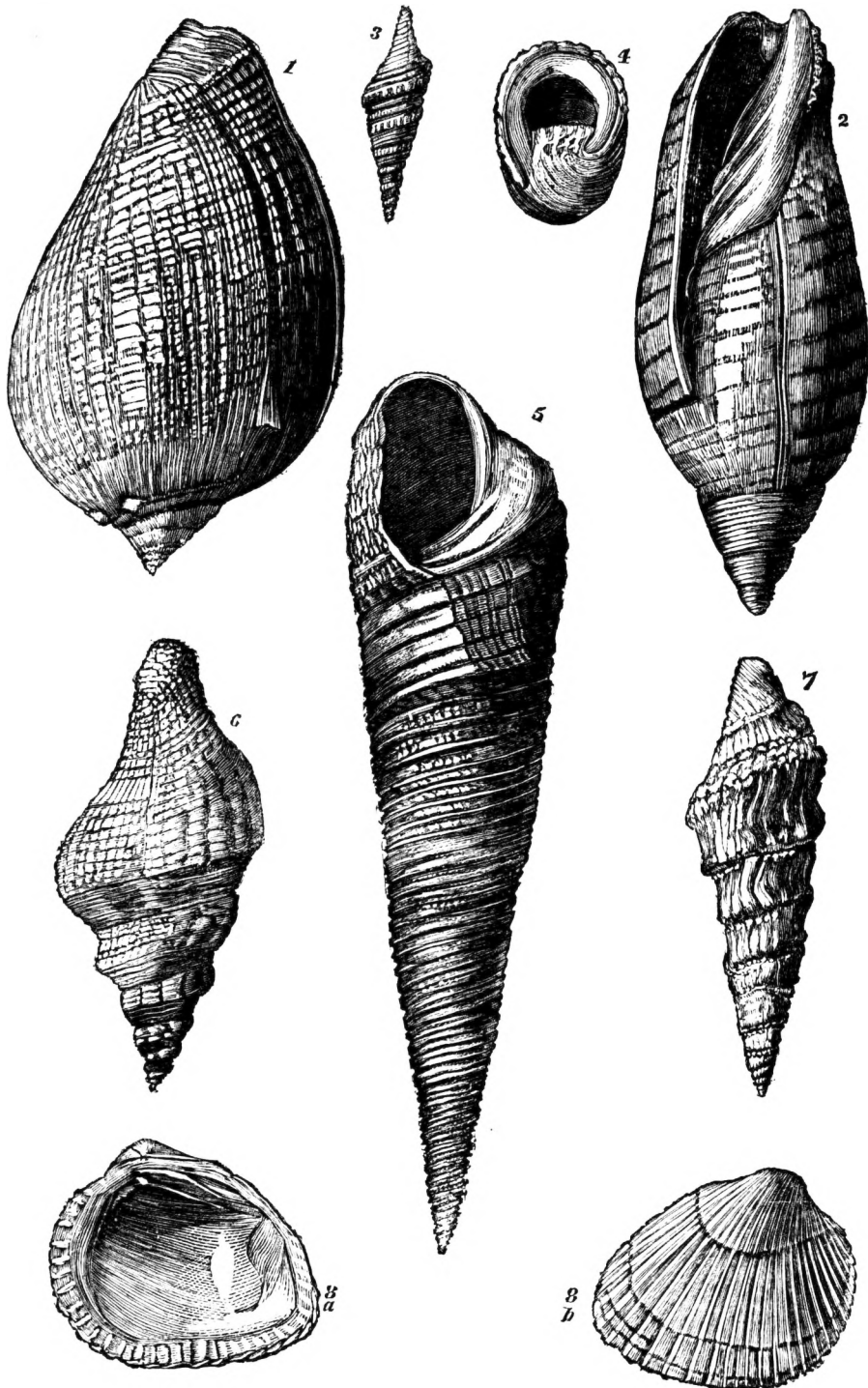
I shall now proceed to notice briefly some of the countries before enumerated as containing monuments of the era under consideration.

Touraine.—I have already alluded to the proofs of superposition adduced by M. Desnoyers, to show that the shelly strata provincially called “the Faluns of the Loire,” were posterior to the most recent freshwater formation of the basin of the Seine. Their position, therefore,

* Ante, p. 224.

FOSSIL SHELLS.

MIOCENE TERTIARY PERIOD.



1. *Voluta rarispina*, Lamk.
2. *Mitra Dufrenoyi*, Bast.
3. *Pleurotoma denticula*, Bast.
4. *Mitra planata*, Bast.

5. *Turritella Proto*, Bast.
6. *Fasciolaria turbinelloides*, Desh.
7. *Pleurotoma tuberculosa*, Bast.
- 8a & b. *Cardita Ajax*, Reuss.

shows that they are of newer origin than the Eocene strata,—more recent, at least, than the uppermost beds of the Paris basin. But an examination of their fossil contents proves also that they are referable to that type which distinguishes the Miocene period. When 300 of the Touraine shells collected by M. Desnoyers were compared by M. Deshayes with more than 1100 of the Parisian species, there were scarcely more than 20 which could be identified; and on the other hand, the fossil shells of the Touraine beds agree far less with the testacea now inhabiting our seas than do the shells of the Older Pliocene strata of Northern Italy.

It is not merely in the basin of the Loire that the superposition of the Miocene to the Eocene strata has been observed; but in the Cotentin (see Map, chap. xx.), and in the environs of Rennes, in Brittany.

The Miocene strata of the Loire have been observed to repose on a great variety of older rocks between Sologne and the sea, in which line they are seen to rest successively upon gneiss, clay-slate, coal-measures, Jura limestone, greenstone, chalk, and lastly upon the upper freshwater deposits of the basin of the Seine. They consist principally of quartzose gravel, sand, and broken shells. The components are generally incoherent, but sometimes agglutinated together by a calcareous or earthy cement, so as to serve as a building stone. Like the shelly portion of the crag of Norfolk and Suffolk, the *faluns* and associated strata are of slight thickness, not exceeding seventy feet. They often bear a close resemblance to the crag in appearance, the shells being stained of the same ferruginous colour, and being in the same state of decay; serving in Touraine, just as in Norfolk and Suffolk, to fertilize the arable land. Like the crag, also, they contain mammiferous remains, which are not only intermixed with marine shells, but sometimes incrustated with serpulæ, flustra, and balani. These terrestrial quadrupeds belong to the genera Mastodon, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, &c., the assemblage, considered as a whole, being very distinct from those of the Paris gypsum.*

The faluns and contemporary strata of the basin of the Loire may be considered generally as having been formed in a shallow sea, into which a river, flowing perhaps from some of the lands now drained by the Loire, introduced from time to time fluviatile shells, wood, and the bones of quadrupeds, which may have been washed down during floods. Some of these bones have precisely the same black colour as those found in the peaty shell-marl of Scotland; and we might imagine them to have been dyed black in *Miocene peat*, which was swept down into the sea during the waste of cliffs, did we not find the remains of cetacea in the same strata—bones, for example, of the lamantine, morse, sea-calf, and dolphin, having precisely the same colour.

The resemblance which M. Desnoyers has pointed out as existing between

* Desnoyers, Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tome ii. p. 443.

the English *crag* and the French *faluns* is one which ought by no means to induce us to ascribe a contemporaneous origin to these two groups, but merely a similarity of geographical circumstances at the respective periods when each was deposited. In every age, where there is land and sea, there must be shores, shallow estuaries, and rivers; and near the sea-coasts banks of marine shells and corals may accumulate. It must also be expected that rivers will drift in freshwater shells, together with sand and pebbles, and occasionally, perhaps, sweep down the carcasses of land quadrupeds into the sea. If the sand and shells, both of the "crag" and "faluns," have each acquired the same ferruginous colour, such a coincidence would merely lead us to infer that, at each period, there happened to be springs charged with iron, which flowed into some part of the sea or basin of the river, by which the sediment was carried down into the sea.

Even had the French and English strata which we are comparing shared a greater number of mineral characters in common, that identity could not have justified us in inferring the synchronous date of the two groups, where the discordance of fossil remains is so marked. The argument which infers a contemporaneous origin from correspondence of mineral contents, proceeds on the supposition that the materials were either washed down from a common source, or, being derived from different sources, were mingled together in a common receptacle. If, according to the latter hypothesis, the *crag* and the *faluns* were thrown down in one continuous sea, the testacea could not have been so distinct in two regions not more distant from each other than Essex and the mouth of the Loire, unless we assume that the laws which regulated the geographical distribution of species were then very different from those now prevailing. But if it be said that the two basins may have been separated from each other, as are those of the Mediterranean and Red Sea, by an isthmus, and that distinct assemblages of species may have flourished in each, as is now actually the case in those two seas,* I may reply, that such narrow lines of demarcation are extremely rare now, and must have been infinitely more so in remoter tertiary epochs; because there can be no doubt that the proportion of land to sea has been greatly on the increase in European latitudes during the more modern geological eras.

In the *faluns*, and in certain groups of the same age, which occur not far to the west of Orleans, M. Desnoyers has discovered the following mammiferous quadrupeds;—*Palæotherium magnum*, *Mastodon angustidens*, *Hippopotamus major* and *H. minutus*, *Rhinoceros leptorhinus* and *R. minutus*, *Tapir gigas*, *Anthracotherium* (small species), *Sus*, *Equus* (small species), *Cervus*, and an undetermined species of the Rodentia.

* See ante, chap. x.

The first species on this list is common to the Paris gypsum, and is therefore an example of a land quadruped common to the Miocene and Eocene formations, an exception perfectly in harmony with the results obtained from the study of fossil shells.*

Basin of the Gironde and district of the Landes.†—A great extent of country between the Pyrenees and the Gironde is overspread by tertiary deposits, which have been more particularly studied in the environs of Bordeaux and Dax, from whence about six hundred species of shells have been obtained. These shells belong to the same zoological type as those of Touraine.‡

Most of the beds near Dax, whence these shells are procured, consist of incoherent quartzose sand, mixed for the most part with calcareous matter, which has often bound together the sand into concretionary nodules. A great abundance of fluviatile shells occurs in many places intermixed with the marine; and in some localities microscopic shells of the order foraminifera are in great profusion.

The tertiary deposits in this part of France vary much in their mineralogical character, yet admit generally of being arranged in four groups. See diagram.

Fig. 139. Adour R. Luy R. Puy Arzet.



Tertiary strata overlying chalk in the environs of Dax.

a, Siliceous sand without shells.

b. Gravel.

c. Sand and marl with shells.

d. Blue marl with shells.

E. Chalk and volcanic tuff.

In some places the united thickness of these groups is considerable; but in the country between the Pyrenees and the valley of the Adour, around Dax, the disturbed secondary rocks are often covered by a thin pellicle only of tertiary strata, which rests horizontally on the chalk, and does not always conceal it.

In the valleys of the Adour and Luy, sections of all the members of

* For further details respecting the basin of the Loire, see M. Desnoyers, *Ann. des Sci. Nat.*, tome xvi., pp. 171. 402, where full references to other authors are given.

† Since this account was first written in 1832, M. Dufrénoy's article on the tertiary strata of the south of France has been published, with lists of shells by M. C. Desmoullins. See *Mémoires pour servir à une Descrip. Géol. de la France*, tom. iii. p. 1. Paris, 1836.

‡ M. de Basterot has given descriptions of more than three hundred shells of Bordeaux and Dax, and figures of the greater number of them. *Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris*, tome ii.

this tertiary formation are laid open ; but the lowest blue marl, which is sometimes two hundred feet thick, is not often penetrated. On the banks of the Luy, however, to the south of Dax, the subjacent white chalk is exposed in inclined and vertical strata. In the hill called Puy Arzet the chalk, characterized by its peculiar fossils, is accompanied by beds of volcanic tuff, which are conformable to it, and which may be considered as the product of submarine eruptions which took place in the sea wherein the chalk was formed. These tuffs must once have been nearly horizontal, but, like the chalky strata, have been subjected to great subsequent derangement.

About a mile west of Orthès, in the Bas Pyrénées, the blue marl is seen to extend to the borders of the tertiary formation, and rises to the height probably of six or seven hundred feet. In that locality many of the marine Miocene shells preserve their original colours. This marl is covered by a considerable thickness of ferruginous gravel, which seems to increase in volume near the borders of the tertiary basin on the side of the Pyrenees.

In an opposite direction, to the north of Dax, the shelly sands often pass into calcareous sandstone, in which there are merely the casts of shells, as at Carcares ; and into a shelly breccia, resembling some rocks of recent origin which I have received from the coral reefs of the Bermudas.

Freshwater limestone at Saucats.—Associated with the Miocene strata near Bordeaux, at a place called Saucats, is a compact freshwater limestone, of slight thickness, which is perforated on the upper surface by marine shells, for the most part of extinct species. It is evident that the ancient surface must at this place have been alternately occupied by salt and fresh water. The ground, perhaps, may have been alternately raised and depressed, or a lagoon may have been formed, in which the water became fresh ; then a barrier of sand, by which the sea was excluded for a time, may have been breached, so that the salt water again obtained access.

M. Dufrénoy has classed this freshwater limestone as Pliocene (*tertiaire supérieur*), but, from the freshwater shells contained in it, as well as from the marine fossils on which it rests and by which it is immediately covered, M. Deshayes and I conclude that it is Miocene. Among the shells determined by M. C. Desmoulins, we find *Cyrena Brongniarti*, Bast., *Planorbis rotundatus*, and *Limnea longiscata*, species found elsewhere in beds older than the Pliocene.*

Eocene strata in the Bordeaux basin.—The relations of some of the members of the tertiary series, in the basin of the Gironde, have of late afforded matter of controversy. A limestone, resembling the calcaire grossier of Paris, and from one hundred to two hundred feet in thickness,

* See M. Dufrénoy's Paper, p. 341.

occurs at Pauliac and Blaye, and extends on the right bank of the Gironde, between Blaye and La Roche. It contains many species of fossils identical with those of the Paris basin. This fact was pointed out to me by M. Deshayes before I visited Blaye in 1830; but although I recognised the mineral characters of the rock to be very different from those of the Miocene formations in the immediate neighbourhood of Bordeaux, I had not time to verify its relative position. I inferred, however, the inferiority of the Blaye limestone to the Miocene strata, from the order in which each series presented itself, as I receded from the chalk and passed to the central parts of the Bordeaux basin.

Upon leaving the white chalk with flints, in travelling from Charante by Blaye to Bordeaux, I first found myself upon overlying red clay and sand (as at Mirambeau): I then came upon the tertiary limestone above alluded to, at Blaye; and lastly, on departing still farther from the chalk, reached the strata which, at Bordeaux and Dax, contain exclusively the Miocene shells.

The occurrence both of Eocene and Miocene fossils in the same basin of the Gironde, had been cited by M. Boué as a fact which detracted from the value of zoological characters as a means of determining the chronological relations of tertiary groups. But on farther inquiry, the fact has been found to furnish additional grounds of confidence in these characters.

M. Ch. Desmoulins replied, to M. Boué's objections, that the assemblage of Eocene shells are never intermixed with those found in the "moellon," as he calls the sandy calcareous rock of the environs of Bordeaux and Dax; and M. Dufrénoy farther stated, that the hills of limestone which border the right bank of the Gironde, from Marmande as far as Blaye, present several sections wherein the Parisian (or Eocene) limestone is seen to be separated from the shelly strata called "faluns," or "moellon," by a freshwater formation of considerable thickness. It appears, therefore, that as the marine faluns of Touraine rest on a freshwater formation, which overlies the marine calcaire grossier of Paris, so the marine Miocene strata of Bordeaux are separated from those of Blaye by a freshwater deposit.*

The following diagram will express the order of position of the groups above alluded to (Fig. 140., p. 346).

M. Dufrénoy considers the upper sands without fossils, which cover the low flat countries of Médoc and the Landes, to be of the age of the Subapennine beds.† But there appears as yet to be scarcely sufficient data to enable us to draw such an inference. It is, however, clear that the true Subapennine or Older Pliocene formation exists between Per-

* Bulletin de la Soc. Géol. de France, tome ii. p. 440.

† See his paper before cited, tome iii. p. 11.

Fig. 140.

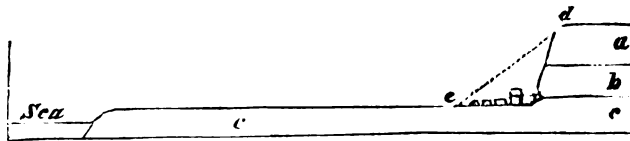


- a. Red clay and sand.
- b. Limestone like *calcaire grossier*, sometimes alternating with green marl, and containing Eocene shells.
- c. Freshwater formation, same as that of the department of Lot and Garonne.
- d. Tertiary strata of the Landes, same as Fig. 139., with Miocene fossils.

pignan and the Pyrenees;* so that in one region, in the south of France, we have the Eocene, Miocene, and Pliocene formations all represented: an important fact, as directly opposed to the theory which endeavours to explain away the distinctness of the fossils of different tertiary groups, by supposing them to have been all deposited in contemporaneous basins belonging to independent zoological provinces, not in lakes and seas inhabited *successively* by distinct species.

Inland cliff near Dax.—A few miles west from Dax, and at the distance of about twelve miles from the sea, a steep bank is seen running in a direction nearly north-east and south-west, or parallel to the contiguous coast. This steep declivity, which is about fifty feet in height, conducts us from the higher platform of the Landes to a lower plain which extends

Fig. 141.



Section of Inland Cliff at Abesse, near Dax.

- a. Sand of the Landes.
- b. Limestone.
- c. Clay.

to the sea. The outline of the ground might suggest to every geologist the opinion that the bank in question was once a sea-cliff, when the whole country stood at a lower level relatively to the sea. But this can no longer be regarded as a matter of conjecture. In making excavations recently for the foundation of a building at Abesse, a quantity of loose sand, which formed the slope *d e*, was removed; and a perpendicular cliff, about fifty feet in height, which had hitherto been protected from the agency of the elements, was exposed. The bottom of this cliff consists of limestone *b*, which contains tertiary shells and corals. Immediately below the limestone is the clay, *c*; and above it the usual tertiary sand, *a*, of the department of the Landes. At the base of the precipice are seen large partially rounded masses of rock, evidently detached from

* See ante, p. 312.

the stratum *b*. The face of the limestone is hollowed out and weathered into such forms as are seen in the calcareous cliffs of the adjoining coast, especially at Biaritz, near Bayonne. It is evident that, when the country was at a somewhat lower level, the sea advanced along the surface of the argillaceous stratum *c*, which, from its yielding nature, favoured the waste by undermining the more solid superincumbent limestone *b*. Afterwards, when the country had been elevated, part of the sand, *a*, fell down, or was drifted by the winds, so as to form the talus, *d e*, which masked the inland cliff until it was artificially laid open to view.

The situation of this cliff is interesting, as marking one of the pauses which intervened between the successive movements of elevation by which the marine tertiary strata of this country were upheaved to their present height, a pause which allowed time for the sea to advance and strip off the upper beds *a*, *b*, from the denuded clay *c*.

Montpellier.—The tertiary strata of Montpellier contain many of the Dax and Bordeaux species of shells, so that they are probably referable to the Miocene epoch; but in the catalogue given by M. Marcel de Serres, many *Pliocene* species, similar to those of the Subapennine beds, are enumerated. M. de Christol mentions *Mastodon angustidens*, *Rhinoceros leptorhinus*, a *Tapir*, a *Palæotherium*, and an *Anthracotherium*, together with many other mam'mifers, besides cetacea and reptiles.*

It would be highly interesting if, upon fuller investigation, the Montpellier beds should be found to indicate a passage from the fossils of the Miocene type to those of the Glder Pliocene. We may expect the discovery of such intermediate links, and I have endeavoured to provide a place for them in the classification proposed in the fifth chapter.†

Hills of Mont Ferrat and the Superga.—The late Signor Bonelli of Turin was the first who remarked that the tertiary shells found in the green sand and marl of the Superga near Turin differed, as a group, from those generally characteristic of the Subapennine beds. The same naturalist had also observed, that many of the species peculiar to the Superga were identical with those occurring near Bordeaux and Dax. The strata of which the hill of the Superga is composed are inclined at an angle of more than seventy degrees, as I found when I examined the Superga in company with Mr. Murchison in 1828. They consist partly of fine sand and marl, and partly of a conglomerate composed of primary boulders, which forms a lower part of the series, and not, as represented by M. Brongniart by mistake, an unconformable and overlying mass.‡ The same series of beds is more largely developed in the chain of Mont Ferrat, especially in the basin of the Bormida. The high road which leads from Savona to Alessandria intersects them in its northern descent, and the

* Résumé de M. Boué, p. 128. Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. iii.

† Ante, 216.

‡ Terrains du Vicentin, p. 26.

formation may be well studied along this line at Carcare, Cairo, and Spinto, at all which localities fossil shells occur in a bright green sand. At Piana, a conglomerate, interstratified with this green sand, contains rounded blocks of serpentine and chlorate schist, larger than those near the summit of the Superga, some of them being not less than nine feet in diameter.

When we descend to Aquis, we find the green sand giving place to bluish marls, which also skirt the plains of the Tanaro at lower levels. These newer marls are associated with sand, and are nearly horizontal, and appear to belong to the Older Pliocene Subapennine strata.* The shells which characterize the latter abound in various parts of the country near Turin; but that region has not yet been examined with sufficient care to enable us to give exact sections to illustrate the superposition of the Miocene and Older Pliocene beds. It is, however, ascertained that the highly inclined green sand, which comes immediately in contact with the primary rocks, is the oldest part of the series.

Molasse of Switzerland.—If we cross the Alps, and pass from Piedmont to Savoy, we find there, at the northern base of the great chain, and throughout the lower country of Switzerland, a soft green sandstone much resembling some of the beds of the basin of the Bormida, above described, and associated in a similar manner with marls and conglomerate. This formation is called in Switzerland “molasse,” said to be derived from “mol,” “soft,” because the stone is easily cut in the quarry. It is of vast thickness; but shells have so rarely been found in it, that they do not supply sufficient data for correctly determining its age. M. Studer, in his treatise on the “molasse,” enumerates some fossil shells found near Lucerne, agreeing, apparently, with those of the Subapennine hills. The correspondence in mineral character between the green sand of Piedmont and that of Switzerland can in nowise authorize us to infer identity of age, but merely to conclude that both have been derived from the degradation of similar ancient rocks.

Until the place of the “molasse” in the chronological series of tertiary formations has been more rigorously determined, the application of this provincial name to the tertiary groups of other countries must be very uncertain, and it will be desirable to confine it to the tertiary beds of Switzerland.

Styria, Vienna, Hungary.—Of the various groups which have hitherto been referred to the Miocene era, none are so important in thickness and geographical extent as those which are found at the eastern extremity of the Alps, in what have been termed the basins of Vienna and Styria, and which spread thence into the plains of Hungary. The collection of shells formed by M. Constant Prevost, in the neighbourhood of Vienna,

* See section, Fig. 84.; ante, p. 206.

and described by him in 1820,* was alone sufficient to identify a great part of the formations of that country with the Miocene beds of the Loire, Gironde, and Piedmont. The fossil remains subsequently procured by that indefatigable observer M. Boué, have served to show the still greater range of the same beds through Hungary and Transylvania.

It appears from the recently published memoirs of Professor Sedgwick and Mr. Murchison,† that the formations of Styria may be divided into groups corresponding to those adopted by M. Partsch for the Vienna beds; the basin of Styria exhibiting nearly the same phenomena as that of Vienna. These regions have evidently formed, during the Miocene period, two deep bays of the same sea, separated from each other by a great promontory connected with the central ridge of the eastern Alps.

The English geologist above mentioned describe a long succession of marine strata intervening between the Alps and the plains of Hungary, which are divisible into three natural groups, each of vast thickness, and affording a great variety of rocks. All these groups are of marine origin, and lie in nearly horizontal strata, but have throughout a slight easterly dip; so that, in traversing them from west to east, we commence with the oldest, and end with the youngest beds.

At their western extremity they fill an irregular trough-shaped depression, through which the waters of the Mur, the Raab, and the Drave, make their way to the lower Danube.‡ Here the first group is developed, consisting of conglomerate, sandstone, and marls, some of the marls containing marine shells. Beds also of lignite occur, showing that wood was drifted down in large quantities into the sea. In parts of the series there are masses of rounded siliceous pebbles, resembling the shingle banks which are forming on some of our coasts.

The second principal group is characterized by coralline and concretionary limestone of a yellowish white colour; it is finely exposed in the escarpments of Wildon, and in the hills of Ehrenhausen, on the right bank of the Mur.§ This coralline limestone is not less than 400 feet thick at Wildon, and exceeds, therefore, some of the most considerable of our secondary groups in England.||

Beds of sandstone, sand, and shale, and calcareous marls, are associated with the above-mentioned limestone.

The third group, which occurs at a still greater distance from the mountains, is composed of sandstone and marl, and of beds of limestone, exhibiting here and there a perfectly oolitic structure. In this system fossil shells are numerous.

In regard to the age of the formations above described, it is by no means

* Journal de Physique, Novembre, 1820.

† Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. iii. p. 301.

§ Ibid., p. 385.

‡ Ibid., p. 382.

|| Ibid., p. 390.

clear that the coralline limestones of the second group are posterior in origin to all the beds of the first division; they may possibly have been formed at some distance from land, while the head of the gulf was becoming filled up with enormous deposits of gravel, sand, and mud, which may, in that quarter, have rendered the waters too turbid for the fullest development of testaceous and coralline animals.

The middle group, both in the basins of Styria and Vienna, belongs indisputably to the Miocene period; for the species of shells are the same as those of the Loire, Gironde, and other contemporary basins before noticed. Whether the lowest and uppermost systems are referable to the same, or to distinct tertiary epochs, is the only question. We cannot doubt that the accumulation of so vast a succession of beds required an immense lapse of ages, and we should expect to find some difference in the species characterising the different members of the series; nevertheless, all may belong to different subdivisions of the Miocene period. Professor Sedgwick and Mr. Murchison have suggested that the inferior, or first group, which comprises the strata between the Alps and the coralline limestone of Wildon, may correspond in age to the Paris basin; but the list of fossils which they have given seems rather to favour the supposition that the deposit is of the Miocene era. They mention four characteristic Miocene fossils,—*Mytilus Brardii*, *Cerithium pictum*, *C. pupæforme*, and *C. plicatum*;—and though some few of the associated shells are common to the Paris basin, such a coincidence is no more than holds true in regard to all the European Miocene formations.

On the other hand, the third or newest system, which overlies the coralline limestone, contains fossils which do not appear to depart so widely from the Miocene type as to authorize us to separate them. They appear to agree with the tertiary strata of a great part of Hungary and Transylvania, which are referable to the Miocene period.*

Volhynia and Podolia.—We may expect to find many other districts in Europe composed of Miocene strata; and there is already sufficient evidence that the marine deposits of the platform of Volhynia and Podolia were of this era. The fossils of that region, which is bounded by Galicia on the west, and the Ukraine on the east, and comprises parts of the basins of the Bog and the Dneister, has been investigated by Von Buch, Eichwald, and Du Bois; and the latter has given excellent plates of more than one hundred fossil shells of the country, which M. Deshayes finds to agree decidedly with the fossils of the Miocene period.†

The formation consists of sand and sandstone, clay, coarse limestone, and a white oolite, the last of which is of great extent.

Mayence.—The tertiary strata near Mayence contain in abundance

* See tables of shells by M. Deshayes, in Appendix I. of the octavo edition.

† *Conch. Foss. du Plateau Wolhyni-Podol.*, par F. du Bois. Berlin, 1831.

the *Mytilus Brardii*, and several other characteristic Miocene fossils. They occupy a tract from five to twelve miles in breadth, extending along the left bank of the Rhine from Mayence to the neighbourhood of Mannheim, and are again found to the east, north, and south-west of Frankfort. In some places they have the appearance of a freshwater formation; but in others, as at Alzey, the shells are for the most part marine. *Cerithia* are in great profusion, which indicates that the sea where the deposit was formed was fed by rivers; and the great quantity of fossil land shells, chiefly of the genus *Helix*, confirm the same opinion. The variety in the species of shells is small, scarcely eighty having yet been discovered, as I learn from Professor Bronn, of Heidelberg, while the individuals are exceedingly numerous; a fact which accords perfectly with the idea that the formation may have originated in a gulf or sea which, like the Baltic, was brackish in some parts and almost fresh in others. A species of *Paludina*, very nearly resembling the recent *Littorina ulva*, is found throughout this basin. These shells may be compared in size to grains of rice, and often are in such quantity as to form almost entire strata of marl and limestone. I have seen them as thick as grains of sand, in stratified masses fifteen feet thick; and Professor Bronn has observed a succession of beds thirty feet in thickness, of which they are the principal constituent.

I was unable to find any natural sections which exhibited the relations of the Mayence strata above described to the sandy beds of Eppelsheim, wherein the new genus *Deinotherium*, and the bones of the *Mastodon avernensis*, and other mammals, have been discovered. But I think it most probable that they all belong to the same era, and that the freshwater beds of Georges Gemund, in Bavaria, as well as several other detached lacustrine groups of that country and of Wurtemberg, may be referred to the Miocene period. At Georges Gemund, as in Touraine, we find an association of the genera *Palæotherium*, *Mastodon*, and *Rhinoceros*.

Osnabruch.—From the fossils which I have seen in the cabinet of Count Munster at Bayreuth, I have little doubt that strata of the Miocene period are largely developed between the mountains of the Teutoburgerwald and Wesergebirge, including the environs of Osnabruch, Münster, Astrupp, and other places.

CHAPTER XVI.

MIocene FORMATIONS—ALLUVIAL—FRESHWATER—VOLCANIC.

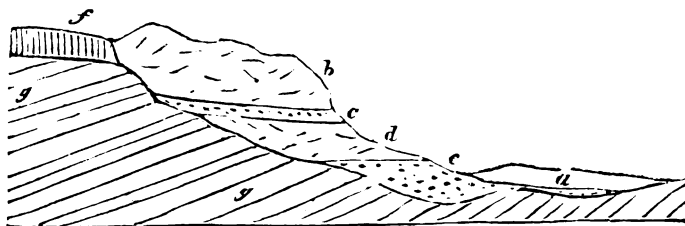
Miocene alluviums—Auvergne—Mont Perrier—Extinct quadrupeds—Velay—Orleanais—Alluviums contemporaneous with Faluns of Touraine—Miocene fresh-water formations—Upper Val d'Arno—Extinct mammalia (p 354.)—Coal of Cadibona—Miocene volcanic rocks—Hungary—Transylvania—Styria—Auvergne—Velay.

IN the present chapter I shall offer some observations on the alluviums and freshwater formations of the Miocene era, and shall afterwards point out the countries in Europe where the volcanic rocks of the same period may be studied.

Miocene Alluviums.

Auvergne.—The annexed drawing will explain the position of two ancient beds of alluvium, *c* and *e*, in Auvergne, in which the remains of

Fig. 142.



Position of the Miocene alluviums of Mont Perrier (or Boulade).

Descending series.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>a.</i> Newer alluvium. | <i>b.</i> Second trachytic breccia. |
| <i>c.</i> Second Miocene alluvium with bones. | |
| <i>d.</i> First trachytic breccia. | |
| <i>e.</i> First Miocene alluvium with bones. | |
| <i>f.</i> Compact basalt. | <i>g.</i> Eocene lacustrine strata. |

several quadrupeds characteristic of the Miocene period have been obtained. In order to account for the situation of these beds of rounded pebbles and sand, we must suppose that after the tertiary strata *g*, covered by the basaltic lava *f*, had been disturbed and exposed to aqueous denudation, a valley was excavated, wherein the alluvium *e* was accumulated, and in which the remains of quadrupeds then inhabiting the country were buried. The trachytic breccia *d* was then superimposed; this breccia is an aggregate of shapeless and angular fragments of trachyte,

cemented by volcanic tuff and pumice, resembling some of the breccias which enter into the composition of the neighbouring extinct volcano of Mont Dor in Auvergne, or those which are found on Etna. Upon this rests another alluvium, *c*, which also contains the bones of Miocene species, and this is covered by another enormous mass of tufaceous breccia. The breccias have probably resulted from the sudden rush of large bodies of water down the sides of an elevated volcano at its moments of eruption, perhaps when snow was melted by lava. Such floods occur in Iceland, sweeping away loose blocks of lava and ejections surrounding the crater, and then strewing the plains with fragments of igneous rocks, enveloped in mud or “moya.” The abrupt escarpment presented by the above-described beds, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, towards the valley of the Couze, must have been caused by subsequent erosion, which has carried away a large portion of those masses.*

In the alluviums *c* and *e*, MM. Croizet, Jobert, Chabriol, and Bouillet have discovered the remains of about forty species of extinct mammalia, the greater part of which are peculiar as yet to this locality; but some of them are characteristic of the Miocene period, being common to the faluns of Touraine, and associated in other localities with marine Miocene strata. Among these species may be enumerated *Mastodon minor* and *M. arvernensis*, *Hippopotamus major*, *Rhinoceros leptorhinus*, and *Tapir arvernensis*. The *Elephas primigenius*, a species common to so many tertiary periods, is also stated to accompany the rest. In some cases the remains are not sufficiently characteristic to indicate the exact species, but the following genera can be determined:—The boar, horse, ox, hyæna (two species), felis (three or four), bear (three), deer (many species), canis, otter, beaver, hare, and water-rat.†

Velay.—In Velay a somewhat similar group of mammiferous remains were found by Dr. Hibbert‡ in a bed of volcanic scorix and tuff, inclosed between two beds of basaltic lava, at Saint Privat d’Allier. Some of the bones were found adhering to the slaggy lava. Among the animals were *Rhinoceros leptorhinus*, *Hyæna spelæa*, and another species allied to the spotted hyæna of the Cape, together with four undetermined species of deer.§

At Cussac and Solilhac, one league from Puy en Velay, M. Robert discovered, in an ancient alluvium covered with lava, the remains of

* For an account of the position and age of the volcanic breccias of Mont Perrier and Boulade, see Lyell and Murchison on the Beds of Mont Perrier, Ed. New Phil. Journ., July, 1829, p. 15.

† Recherches sur les Oss. Foss. du Dépt. du Puy de Dome, 4to. 1828. Essai Géol. et Minéral. sur les Environs d’Issoire Dépt. du Puy de Dome, folio, 1827.

‡ Edin. Journ. of Sci., No. iv., New Series, p. 276.

§ Figures of some of these remains are given by M. Bertrand de Doue, Ann. de la Soc. d’Agricult. de Puy, 1828.

Elephas primigenius, *Rhinoceros leptorhinus*, *Tapir arvernensis*, horse (two species), deer (seven species), ox (two species), and an antelope.

Orleanais.—In the Orleanais, at Avaray, Chevilly, les Aides, and les Barres, fossil land quadrupeds have been found associated with fluviatile shells and reptiles, identical with those found in the marine faluns of Touraine.* These are supposed with great probability, by M. Desnoyers to mark the passage of streams which flowed towards the sea in which the faluns were deposited.

Miocene Freshwater Formations.

Upper Val d'Arno.—There are a great number of isolated tertiary formations, of freshwater origin, resting on primary and secondary rocks in different parts of Europe, in the same manner as we now find small lakes scattered over our continents and islands, wherein deposits are forming, quite detached from all contemporary marine strata. To determine the age of such groups, with reference to the great chronological series established for the marine strata, must often be a matter of difficulty, since we cannot always enjoy an opportunity of studying a locality where the freshwater species are intermixed with marine shells, or where they occur in beds alternating with marine strata.

The deposit of the upper Val d'Arno before alluded to (p. 305), was evidently formed in an ancient lake; but, although the fossil testaceous and mammiferous remains preserved therein are very numerous, it is scarcely possible, at present, to decide with certainty the precise era to which they belong. I collected six species of lacustrine shells, in an excellent state of preservation, from this basin, belonging to the genera *Anodon*, *Paludina*, and *Neritina*; but M. Deshayes was unable to identify any one of them with any recent or fossil species known to him. If the beds belonged to the Older Pliocene formations, we might expect that several of the fossils would agree specifically with living testacea; and I am therefore disposed to believe that they belong to an older epoch. If we consider the terrestrial mammalia of the same beds, we immediately perceive that they cannot be assimilated to the Eocene type, as exhibited in the Paris basin, or in Auvergne and Velay: but some of them agree with Miocene species. Mr. Pentland has obligingly sent me the following list of the fossil mammifers of the upper Val d'Arno which are in the museums of Paris.—*Feræ*—*Ursus cultridens*, *Viverra Valdarnensis*, *Canis lupus* (?), and another of the size of the common fox. *Hyæna radiata*, *H. fossilis*. *Felis* (a new species, of the size of the panther). *Rodentia*—*Histrix*, nearly allied to *dorsalis*, *Castor*. *Pachydermata*—*Elephas Italicus*, *Mastodon angustidens*, *M. Taperoides*, *Tapir* —,

* MM. Desnoyers and Lockart, Bulletin de la Soc. Géol., tom. ii. p. 336.

Equus —, *Sus scrofa*, *Rhinoceros leptorhinus*, *Hippopotamus major*, fossilis. *Ruminantia*—*Cervus megaceros* (?), *C. Valdarnensis*, *C.* — (new species), *Bos*, *bubalo affinis*, *B. urus* and *B. taurus*.

Cuvier also mentions the remains of a species of *lophiodon* as occurring among the bones in the Upper Val d'Arno.* The elephant of this place has been called by Nesti† *meridionalis*, and is considered by him as distinct from the Siberian fossil species *E. primigenius*, with which, however, some eminent comparative anatomists regard it as identical.

Fig. 143.



Section of the freshwater formation of Cadibona.

- a. Blue marl and yellow sand (Older Pliocene).
- b. Sand, shale, and coal of Cadibona (Miocene?).
- c. Green sand, &c., of the Bormida (Miocene).
- d. Chloritic and Micaceous schist, serpentine, &c

The skeletons of the hippopotamus are exceedingly abundant; no less than forty had been procured when I visited Florence in 1828. Remains of the elephant, stag, ox, and horse, are also extremely numerous. In winter the superficial degradation of the soil is so rapid, that bones which the year before were buried are seen to project from the surface of the soil, and are described by the peasants as growing. In this manner the tips of the horns of stags, or of the tusks of hippopotamuses, often appear on the surface, and thus lead to the discovery of an entire head or skeleton.

Cadibona.—Another example of an isolated lacustrine deposit, belonging possibly to the Miocene period, is that which occurs at Cadibona, between Savona and Carcare; a place which I visited in August 1828, in company with Mr. Murchison. Its position is described in the annexed section, which does not, however, pretend to accuracy in regard to the relative heights of the different rocks, or the distances of the places from each other. The lacustrine strata are composed of gravel, grit, and micaceous sandstone, of such materials as were derivable from the surrounding primary rocks; and so great is the thickness of this mass, that some valleys intersect it to the depth of seven or eight hundred feet without penetrating to the subjacent formations. In one part of the series, carbonaceous shales occur, and several seams of coal from two to six feet in thickness; but no impressions of plants of which the species could be

* Oss. Foss., vol. v. p. 504.

† Lettere sopra alcune Ossa Fossili del Val d'Arno, &c. Pisa, 1825.

determined, and no shells have been discovered. Many entire jaws and other bones of an extinct mammifer, called by Cuvier *Anthracotherium*, have been found in the coal-beds, the bone being itself changed into a kind of coal; but as this species has not as yet occurred elsewhere in association with organic remains of known date, it affords us no aid when we attempt to assign a place to the lignites of Cadibona.

Miocene Volcanic rocks.

Hungary.—M. Beudant, in his elaborate work on Hungary, describes five distinct groups of volcanic rocks, which, although nowhere of great extent, form striking features in the physical geography of that country, rising as they do abruptly from extensive plains composed of tertiary strata. They may have constituted islands in the ancient sea, as Santorin and Milo now do in the Grecian Archipelago; and M. Beudant has remarked that the mineral products of the last-mentioned islands resemble remarkably those of the Hungarian extinct volcanos, where many of the same minerals, as opal, calcedony, resinous silex (*silex resinite*), pearlite, obsidian, and pitchstone abound.

The Hungarian lavas are chiefly felspathic, consisting of different varieties of trachyte; many are cellular, and used as millstones; some so porous and even scoriform as to resemble those which have issued in the open air. Pumice occurs in great quantity: and there are conglomerates, or rather breccias, wherein fragments of trachyte are bound together by pumiceous tuff, or sometimes by silex.

It is probable that these rocks were permeated by the waters of hot springs, impregnated, like the Geysers, with silica; or, in some instances, perhaps, by aqueous vapours, which, like those of Lancerote, may have precipitated hydrate of silica.*

By the influence of such springs or vapours the trunks and branches of trees washed down during floods, and buried in tuffs on the flanks of the mountains, may have become silicified. It is scarcely possible, says M. Beudant, to dig into any of the pumiceous deposits of these mountains without meeting with opalized wood, and sometimes entire silicified trunks of trees of great size and weight.

It appears from the species of shells collected principally by M. Boué, and examined by M. Deshayes, that the fossil remains imbedded in the volcanic tuffs, and in strata alternating with them in Hungary, are of the Miocene type, and not identical, as was formerly supposed, with the fossils of the Paris basin.

Transylvania.—The igneous rocks of the eastern part of Transylvania, described by M. Boué, are probably of the same age. They cover a

* See Vol. I., p. 350.

considerable area, and bear a close resemblance to the Hungarian lavas, being chiefly trachytic. Several large craters, containing shallow lakes, like the Maars of the Eifel, are met with in some regions; and a rent in the trachytic mountains of Budoshagy exhales hot sulphureous vapours, which convert the trachyte into alum-stone; a change which that rock has undergone at remote periods in several parts of Hungary.

Styria.—Many of the volcanic groups of this country bear a similar relation to the Styrian tertiary deposits, as do the Hungarian rocks to the marine strata of that country. The shells are found imbedded in the volcanic tuffs in such a manner as to show that they lived in the sea when the volcanic eruptions were in progress, as many of the Val di Noto lavas in Sicily, before described, were shown to be contemporaneous with the Newer Pliocene strata.*

Auvergne—Velay.—I believe that part of the volcanic eruptions of Auvergne took place during the Miocene period; those, for example, which cover, or are interstratified with, the alluviums mentioned in this chapter, and some of the ancient basaltic cappings of hills in Auvergne, which repose on gravel characterized by similar organic remains. A part also of the igneous rocks of Velay must belong to this epoch; but these will be again referred to when I treat more fully of the volcanic rocks of Central France, the older part of which are referable to the Eocene period.

CHAPTER XVII.

EOCENE FRESHWATER FORMATIONS.

Eocene period—Freshwater formations—Central France—Map—Limagne d'Auvergne—Sandstone and conglomerate—Tertiary red marl and red sandstone—Green and white foliated marls (p. 361.)—Indusial limestone—Gypseous marls—Travertin—Freshwater formation of Puy en Velay (p. 366.)—Of Cantal—Resemblance of Aurillac limestone and flints to our upper chalk—Concluding remarks.

WE have now traced back the history of the European formations to that period when the seas and lakes were inhabited by testacea, of which a few only belonged to species now existing; a period which I have designated *Eocene*, as indicating the *dawn* of the present state of the animate

* Sedgwick and Murchison, Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. iii. p. 400. Daubeny's Volcanos, p. 92.

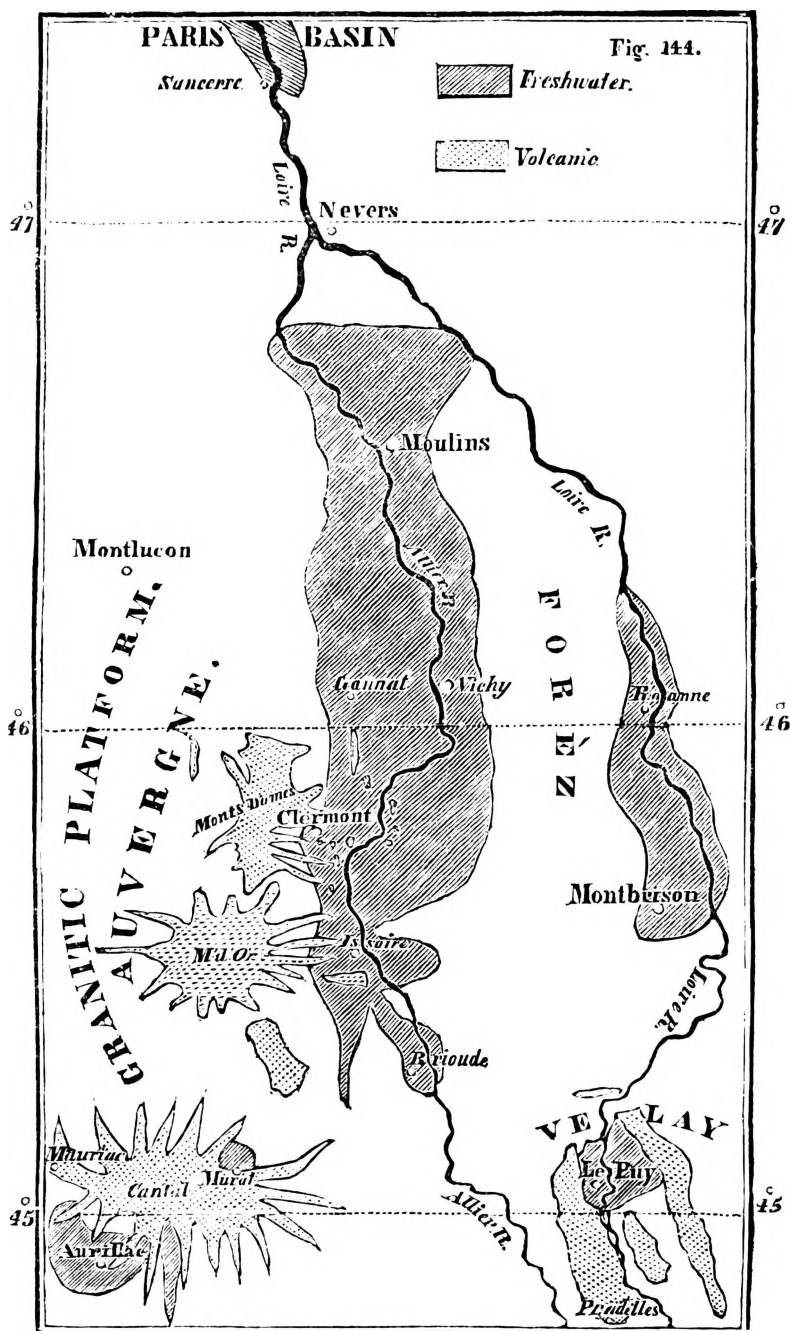
creation. But although a small number only of the living species of animals were then in being, there are ample grounds for inferring that all the great classes of the animal kingdom, such as they now exist, were then fully represented. In regard to the testacea, indeed, it is no longer a matter of inference; for more than 1200 species of this class have been obtained from that small number of detached Eocene deposits which have hitherto been examined in Europe.

The celebrated Paris basin, the position of which was pointed out in the former part of this book (see wood-cut, ante, p. 202), first presents itself, and seems to claim our chief attention when we examine the phenomena of this era. But in order the more easily to explain the peculiar nature and origin of that group, it will be desirable, first, to give a brief sketch of certain deposits of Central France, which afford many interesting points of analogy to that of Paris, both in organic remains and mineral composition, and where the original circumstances under which the strata were accumulated may more easily be discerned.

Auvergne.—The deposits alluded to, which I examined in the summer of 1828, in company with Mr. Murchison, are those of the lacustrine basins of Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay, and their sites may be seen in the annexed Map. They appear to be the monuments of ancient lakes, which may have resembled in geographical distribution some of those now existing in Switzerland, and may like them have occupied the depressions in a mountainous country, and have been each fed by one or more rivers and torrents. The country where they occur is almost entirely composed of granite and different varieties of granitic schist, with here and there a few patches of secondary strata much dislocated, and which have probably suffered great denudation. There are also some vast piles of volcanic matter (see the annexed Map), the greater part of which is newer than the freshwater strata, and is sometimes seen to rest upon them, whilst a small part has evidently been of contemporaneous origin. Of these igneous rocks I shall treat more particularly in the nineteenth chapter, and shall now speak only of the lacustrine beds.

The most northern of the freshwater groups is situated in the valley-plain of the Allier, which lies within the department of the Puy de Dome, being the tract which went formerly by the name of the Limagne d'Auvergne. It is inclosed by two parallel primitive ranges,—that of the Foréz, which divides the waters of the Loire and Allier, on the east; and that of the Monts Domes, which separates the Allier from the Sioule, on the west.* The average breadth of this tract is about twenty miles; and it is for the most part composed of nearly horizontal strata of sand, sandstone, calcareous marl, clay, and limestone, none of which observe a fixed and invariable order of superposition. The ancient borders of the

* Scrope, *Geology of Central France*, p. 15.



lake wherein the freshwater strata were accumulated, may generally be traced with precision, the granite and other ancient rocks rising up boldly from the level country. The precise junction, however, of the lacustrine and granitic beds is rarely seen, as a small valley usually intervenes between them. The freshwater strata may sometimes be seen to retain their horizontality within a very slight distance of the border-rocks, while in some places they are inclined, and in a few instances vertical. The principal divisions into which the lacustrine series may be separated are the following:—1st, Sandstone, grit, and conglomerate, including red marl and red sandstone. 2dly, Green and white foliated marls. 3dly, Limestone or travertin, oolite. 4thly, Gypseous marls.

1. *a. Sandstone and conglomerate.*—Strata of sand and gravel, sometimes bound together into a solid rock, are found in great abundance around the confines of the lacustrine basin, containing, in different places, pebbles of all the ancient rocks of the adjoining elevated country; namely, granite, gneiss, mica-schist, clay-slate, porphyry, and others. But the arenaceous strata do not form one continuous band around the margin of the basin, being rather disposed like the independent deltas which grow at the mouths of torrents along the borders of existing lakes.*

At Chamalieres, near Clermont, we have an example of one of these littoral groups of local extent, where the pebbly beds slope away from the granite as if they had formed a talus beneath the waters of the lake near the steep shore. A section of about fifty feet in vertical height has been laid open by a torrent, and the pebbles are seen to consist throughout of rounded and angular fragments of granite, quartz, primary slate, and red sandstone; but without any intermixture of those volcanic rocks which now abound in the neighbourhood. Partial layers of lignite and pieces of wood are found in these beds, but no shells; a fact which probably indicates that testacea could not live where the turbid waters of a stream were frequently hurrying down uprooted trees, together with sand and pebbles, or that, if they existed, they were triturated by the transported rocks.

There are other localities on the margin of the basin where quartzose grits are found, composed of white sand bound together by a siliceous cement.

Occasionally, when the grits rest on granite, as at Chamalieres before mentioned, and many other places, the separate crystals of quartz, mica, and felspar, of the disintegrated granite, are bound together again by the siliceous cement, so that the granite seems regenerated in a new and even more solid form; and thus so gradual a passage may easily be traced between a crystalline rock and one of mechanical origin, that we can scarcely distinguish where one ends and the other begins.

In the Puy de Jussat, and the neighbouring hill of La Roche, are white

* See Book II. chap. v.

quartzose grits, cemented by calcareous matter, which is sometimes so abundant as to form imbedded nodules. These sometimes constitute spheroidal concretions six feet in diameter, and pass into beds of solid limestone resembling the Italian travertins, or the deposits of mineral springs.

In the hills above mentioned, we have the advantage of seeing a section continuously exposed for about seven hundred feet in thickness. At the bottom are foliated marls, white and green, about four hundred feet thick; and above, resting on the marls, are the quartzose grits before mentioned, with the associated travertins. This section is close to the confines of the basin; so that the lake must here have been filled up near the shore with fine mud, before the coarse superincumbent sand was introduced. There are other cases where sand is seen below the marl.

1. *b. Red marl and sandstone.*—But the most remarkable of the arenaceous groups is one of red sandstone and red marl, which are identical in all their characters with the secondary *new red sandstone* and marl of England. In these secondary rocks, the red ground is sometimes variegated with light greenish spots, and the same may be seen in the tertiary formation of freshwater origin at Coudes, on the Allier. The marls are sometimes of a purplish-red colour, as at Champheix, and are accompanied by a reddish limestone like the well-known “cornstone,” which is associated with the old red sandstone of English geologists. The red sandstone and marl of Auvergne have evidently been derived from the degradation of gneiss and mica-schist, which are seen *in situ* on the adjoining hills, decomposing into a soil very similar to the tertiary red sand and marl. We also find pebbles of gneiss, mica-schist, and quartz, in the coarser sandstones of this group, clearly pointing to the parent rocks from which the sand and marl were derived. The red beds, although destitute themselves of organic remains, pass upwards into strata containing Eocene fossils, and are certainly an integral part of the lacustrine formation.

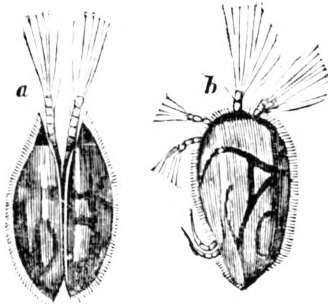
2. *Green and white foliated marls.*—A great portion of what we term clay in ordinary language consists of the same materials as sand, but the component parts are in a finer state of subdivision. The same primary rocks, therefore, of Auvergne which, by the partial degradation of their harder parts, gave rise to the quartzose grits and conglomerates before mentioned, would, by the reduction of the same materials into powder, and by the decomposition of their felspar, mica, and hornblende, produce aluminous clay; and, if a sufficient quantity of carbonate of lime was present, calcareous marl. This fine sediment would naturally be carried out to a greater distance from the shore, as are the various finer marls now deposited in Lake Superior.* And, as in the American lake,

* See Vol. I. pp. 216, 217.

shingle and sand are annually amassed near the northern shores, so in Auvergne the grits and conglomerates before mentioned were evidently formed near the borders.

The entire thickness of these marls is unknown; but it certainly exceeds, in some places, seven hundred feet. They are for the most part either light-green or white, and usually calcareous. They are thinly foliated,—a character which frequently arises from the innumerable thin plates or scales of that small animal called *Cypris*; a genus which comprises several species, of which some are recent, and may be seen swimming swiftly through the waters of our stagnant pools and ditches. The antennæ, at the end of which are fine pencils of hair, are the principal

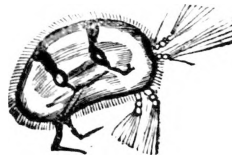
Fig. 145.



Cypris unifasciata, a living species,
greatly magnified.

a. Upper part.

Fig. 146.



Cypris vidua, a living species,
greatly magnified.*

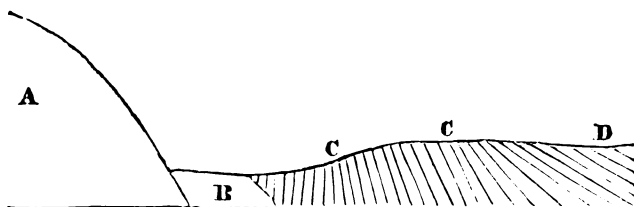
b. Side view of the same.

organs for swimming, and are moved with great rapidity. This animal resides within two small valves not unlike those of a bivalve shell, and moults its integuments annually, which the conchiferous mollusks do not. This circumstance may partly explain the countless myriads of the shells of cypris which were shed in the Eocene lakes, so as to give rise to divisions in the marl as thin as paper, and that too in stratified masses several hundred feet thick. A more convincing proof of the tranquillity and clearness of the waters, and of the slow and gradual process by which the lake was filled up with fine mud, cannot be desired. But we may easily suppose that, while this fine sediment was thrown down in the deep and central parts of the basin, gravel, sand, and rocky fragments were hurried into the lake near the shore, and formed the group described in the preceding section.

Not far from Clermont, the green marls, containing the cypris in abundance, approach to within a few yards of the granite which forms the borders of the basin. The annexed section occurs at Champradelle, in a small ravine north of La petite Baraque, and above the bridge.

* See Desmarest's Crustacea, plate 55.

Fig. 147.

*Vertical strata of marl near Clermont.*

- A. Granite. B. Space of sixty feet, in which no section is seen.
C. Green marl, vertical and inclined. D. White marl.

The occurrence of these marls so near the ancient margin may be explained by considering that, at the bottom of the ancient lake, no coarse ingredients were deposited in spaces intermediate between the points where rivers and torrents entered, but finer mud only was drifted there by currents. The *verticality* of some of the beds in the above section bears testimony to considerable local disturbance subsequent to the deposition of the marls; but such inclined and vertical strata are very rare.

3. *Limestone, travertin, oolite*.—Both the preceding members of the lacustrine deposit, the marls and grits, pass occasionally into limestone. Sometimes only concretionary nodules abound in them; but these, where there is an increase in the quantity of calcareous matter, unite, as already noticed (*ante*, p. 361), into regular beds.

On each side of the basin of the Limagne, both on the west at Gannat, and on the east at Vichy, a white oolitic limestone is quarried. At Vichy, the oolite resembles our Bath stone in appearance and beauty, and, like it, is soft when first taken from the quarry, but soon hardens on exposure to the air. At Gannat, the stone contains land-shells and bones of quadrupeds, resembling those of the Paris gypsum. In several places in the neighbourhood of Gannat, at Marculot among others, this stone is divided by layers of clay.

At Chadrat, in the hill of La Serre, the limestone is pisolitic, and in this and other respects resembles the travertin of Tivoli. It presents the same combination of a radiated and concentric structure, and the coats of the different spheroids have the same undulating surface.*

Indusial limestone.—There is another remarkable form of freshwater limestone in Auvergne, called “indusial,” from the cases, or *indusiæ*, of the larvæ of *Phryganea*, great heaps of which have been incrustated, as they lay, by carbonate of lime, and formed into a hard travertin. Several beds of this rock, either in continuous masses, or in concretionary nodules, are seen superimposed one upon another, with layers of marl interposed.

* See Fig. 12., Vol. I. p. 204.

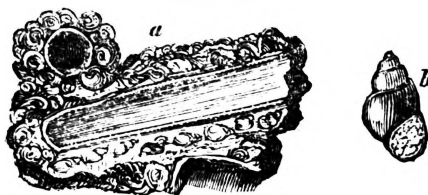
We may often observe in our ponds some of the living species of this kind of insect, covered with small freshwater shells, which they have the power of fixing to the outside of their tubular cases, in order, probably, to give them weight and strength.



Larva of recent *Phryganea*.*

The individual figured in the annexed cut, which belongs to a species very abundant in England, has happened to cover its case with shells of a small *Planorbis*. In the same manner a large species which swarmed in the Eocene lakes of Auvergne was accustomed to attach to its dwelling the shells of a small spiral univalve of the genus *Paludina*. A hundred of these minute shells are sometimes seen arranged around one tube, part of the central cavity of which is often empty, the rest being filled up with thin concentric layers of travertin. The cases have been thrown together confusedly, and often lie, as in Fig. 149., at right angles one to the other. When we consider that ten or twelve tubes are packed within the compass of a cubic inch, and that some single strata of this limestone are six feet thick, and may

Fig. 149.



a. Indusial limestone of Auvergne.

b. Fossil *Paludina* magnified.

be traced over a considerable area, we may form some idea of the countless number of insects and mollusca which contributed their integuments and shells to compose this singularly constructed rock. It is unnecessary to suppose that the *Phryganeæ* lived on the spots where their cases are now found; they may have multiplied in the shallows near the margin of the lake, or in the streams by which it was fed, and their buoyant cases may have been drifted by a current far into the deep water.†

The calcareous strata of the Limagne, like the other members of this lacustrine formation, are for the most part horizontal, or inclined at a very slight angle, but instances of local dislocation are sometimes observable. At the town of Vichy, for example, in an ancient quarry behind the convent of Celestines, the strata dip at an angle of between thirty and forty degrees; and near the hot spring at the same place, the beds of

* I believe that the British specimen here figured is *P. rhombica*, Linn.

† For remarks on the floating of empty land shells by rivers, see ante, pp. 218. 290, 291.

limestone are seen, in one part of the section, inclined at an angle of eighty degrees, and in another vertical.

4. *Gypseous marls*.—More than fifty feet of thinly laminated gypseous marls, exactly resembling those in the hill of Montmartre, at Paris, are worked for gypsum at St. Romain, on the right bank of the Allier. They rest on a series of green cypriferous marls which alternate with grit, the united thickness of this inferior group being seen, in a vertical section on the banks of the river, to exceed 250 feet.

General arrangement and origin of the freshwater formations of Auvergne.—The relations of the different groups above described cannot be learnt by the study of any one section, and the geologist who sets out with the expectation of finding a fixed order of succession may perhaps complain that the different parts of the basin give contradictory results. The arenaceous division (1. p. 360), the marls (2. p. 361), and the limestone (3. p. 363), may all be seen in some places to alternate with each other; yet it can by no means be affirmed that there is no order of arrangement. The sands, sandstone, and conglomerate, constitute in general a littoral group; the foliated white and green marls, a contemporaneous central deposit; and the limestone is for the most part subordinate to the newer portions of both. The uppermost marls and sands are more calcareous than the lower; and we never meet with calcareous rocks covered by a considerable thickness of quartzose sand or green marl. From the resemblance of the Eocene limestones of Auvergne to the Italian travertins, we may conclude that they were derived from the waters of mineral springs,—such springs as now exist in Auvergne, and which, rising up through the granite, precipitate travertin. They are sometimes thermal, but this character is by no means constant.

It seems that, when the ancient lake of the Limagne first began to be filled with sediment, no volcanic action had yet produced lava and scorix on any part of the surface of Auvergne. No pebbles, therefore, of lava were transported into the lake,—no fragments of volcanic rocks imbedded in the conglomerate. But at a later period, when a considerable thickness of sandstone and marl had accumulated, eruptions broke out, and lava and tuff were deposited, at some spots, alternately with the lacustrine strata. Proofs of this will be given in the 19th chapter. It is not improbable that cold and thermal springs, holding different mineral ingredients in solution, became more numerous during the successive convulsions attending this development of volcanic agency, and thus deposits of carbonate and sulphate of lime, siliceous, and other minerals were produced. Hence these minerals predominate in the uppermost strata. The subterranean movements may then have continued until they altered the relative levels of the country, and caused the waters of the lakes to be drained off, and the farther accumulation of regular freshwater strata to cease. The occurrence of these convulsions anterior to the Miocene epoch, and their

continuance during a succession of after-ages, may explain why no freshwater formations more recent than the Eocene are now found in this country.

We may easily conceive a similar series of events to give rise to analogous results in any modern basin, such as that of Lake Superior, for example, where numerous rivers and torrents are carrying down the detritus of a chain of mountains into the lake. The transported materials must be arranged according to their size and weight, the coarser near the shore, the finer at a greater distance from land; but in the gravelly and sandy beds of Lake Superior no pebbles of modern volcanic rocks can be included, since there are none of these at present in the district. If igneous action should break out in that country and produce lava, scoriæ, and thermal springs, the deposition of gravel, sand, and marl might still continue as before; but in addition there would then be an intermixture of volcanic gravel and tuff, and of rocks precipitated from the waters of mineral springs.

Although the freshwater strata of the Limagne approach generally to a horizontal position, the proofs of local disturbance are sufficiently numerous and violent to allow us to suppose great changes of level since the Eocene period. We are unable to assign a northern barrier to the ancient lake, although we can still trace its limits to the east, west, and south, where they were formed of bold granitic eminences. But we need not be surprised at our inability to restore the physical geography of the country after so great a series of volcanic eruptions; for it is by no means improbable that one part of it may have been moved upwards bodily, while others remained at rest, or even suffered a movement of depression.

Puy en Velay.—In the department of the Haute Loire, a freshwater formation, very analogous to that of Auvergne, is situated in the basin of the Loire, and is exposed in the valley in which stands the town of Le Puy. Since the deposition of the lacustrine strata, there have been so many volcanic eruptions in this country, and such immense quantities of lava and scoriæ have been poured out upon the surface, that the aqueous rocks are almost buried and concealed. But we are indebted to the researches of M. Bertrand de Doue, for having distinctly ascertained the succession of strata, and I have myself had opportunities of verifying his observations during a visit to Le Puy.

In this basin we find, as in Auvergne, two great divisions, consisting of grits and marls; the former composed of quartzose grit, in some places resembling granite, and of reddish and mottled sands and conglomerates. All these were evidently derived from the degradation of granitic rocks, and are very like the arenaceous group of the Limagne before described. They are almost confined to the borders of the basin, and were evidently a littoral deposit. The other member of the formation, the *marls*, are more or less calcareous, and are associated with limestone and gypsum,

which last exactly resembles that of Paris, and is worked for agricultural uses.

The analogy in the mineral character of the Velay and Paris basins is rendered more complete by the presence in both of silex in regular beds. In the limestone I found gyrogonites, or seeds of the *Chara*, of the same species as those most common in the Paris basin; and M. Bertrand de Doue has discovered the bones of several mammiferous animals of the same genera as those which characterize the basins of Auvergne and Paris.* The species of shells also of this formation are the same as those of Eocene formations in other parts of France.

The sand and conglomerate of the freshwater basin of Velay are entirely free from volcanic pebbles, agreeing in this respect with the analogous group of the Limagne; but the fact is the more striking in Velay, because the masses of trachyte, clinkstone, and other igneous rocks now abounding in that country, have an aspect of very high antiquity, and constitute a most prominent feature in the geological structure of the district. Yet the non-intermixture of volcanic products with the lacustrine sediment, is just what we should expect when we have ascertained that the imbedded organic remains of those strata are Eocene; whereas the lavas belong in part, if not entirely, to the Miocene period.†

Cantal.—Near Aurillac, in Cantal, another series of freshwater strata occurs, which resembles, in mineral character and organic remains, those of Auvergne and Velay already described. The leading feature of this group, as distinguished from the two former, is the immense abundance of silex associated with the calcareous marls and limestone, which last constitute, like the limestone of Auvergne, an upper member of the freshwater series.

The formations of the Cantal may be divided into two groups, the lower composed of gravel, sand, and clay, such as might have been derived from the wearing down and decomposition of the granitic schists of the surrounding country; the upper system, consisting of siliceous and calcareous marls, contains subordinately gypsum, silex, and limestone—deposits such as the waters of springs charged with carbonate and sulphate of lime, and with silica, may have produced.

Freshwater limestone and flints resembling chalk.—To the English geologist, the most interesting feature in the Cantal is the resemblance of the freshwater limestone, and its accompanying flint, to our upper chalk; a resemblance which (like that of the red sandstone of Auvergne to our secondary “new red”) is the more important, as being calculated to put the student upon his guard against relying too implicitly on lithological characters as tests of the relative ages of rocks. When we approach

* Descrip. Géognos. des Env. du Puy en Velay, 1823.

† See ante, p. 353; and chap. xix.

Aurillac from the west, we pass over great heathy plains, where the sterile mica-schist is barely covered with vegetation. Near Ytrac, and between La Capelle and Viscamp, we find the surface strewn over with loose broken flints, some of them black in the interior, but with a white external coating; others stained with tints of yellow and red, and in appearance precisely like the flint gravel of our chalk districts. When heaps of this gravel have thus announced our approach to a new formation, we arrive at length at the escarpment of the lacustrine beds. At the bottom of the hill which rises before us, we see strata of clay and sand resting on mica-schist; and above, in the quarries of Belbet, Leybros, and Bruel, a white limestone, in horizontal strata, the surface of which has been hollowed out into irregular furrows, since filled up with broken flint, marl, and dark vegetable mould. In these cavities we recognise an exact counterpart to those which are so numerous on the furrowed surface of our own white chalk. Advancing from these quarries, along a road made of the white limestone, which reflects as glaring a light in the sun, as do our roads composed of chalk, we reach, at length, in the neighbourhood of Aurillac, hills of limestone and calcareous marl, in horizontal strata, separated in some places by regular layers of flint in nodules, the coating of each nodule being of an opaque white colour, like the exterior of the flinty nodules of our chalk. This hard white substance has been ascertained in England to consist, in some instances, wholly of siliceous matter, and sometimes to contain a small admixture of carbonate of lime,* and the analysis of the similar rocks in the Cantal would probably give the same results. The Aurillac flints have precisely the appearance of having separated from their matrix after the siliceous and calcareous matter had been blended together. The calcareous marl sometimes occupies small sinuous cavities in the flint; and the siliceous nodule, when detached, is often as irregular in form as those found in our chalk.

By what means, then, can the geologist at once decide that the limestone and silex of Aurillac are referable to an epoch entirely distinct from that of the English chalk? It is not by reference to position; for we can merely say of the lacustrine beds, as we should have been able to declare of the true chalk had it been present, that they overlies the granite rocks of this part of France. It is from the organic remains only that we are able to pronounce the formation to belong to the Eocene tertiary period. Instead of the marine *Aleyonia* of our cretaceous system, the silicified seed-vessels of the *Chara*, a plant which grows at the bottom of lakes, abound in the flints of Aurillac, both in those which are *in situ* and those forming the gravel. Instead of the *Echini* and marine testacea of the chalk, we find in these marls and limestones the shells of the *Planorbis*, and other lacustrine testacea, all of them, like the *gyrogonites*, agreeing specifically with species of the Eocene type.

* Phillips, Geol. Trans., First Series, vol. v. p. 22.—Outlines of Geology, p. 95.

Proofs of the gradual deposition of marl.—Some sections of the foliated marls in the valley of the Cer, near Aurillac, attest, in the most unequivocal manner, the extreme slowness with which the materials of the lacustrine series were amassed. In the hill of Barrat, for example, we find an assemblage of calcareous and siliceous marls, in which, for a depth of at least sixty feet, the layers are so thin that thirty are sometimes contained in the thickness of an inch; and when they are separated we see preserved in every one of them the flattened stems of *Charæ*, or other plants, or sometimes myriads of small *paludinæ* and other fresh-water shells. These minute foliations of the marl resemble precisely some of the recent laminated beds of the Scotch marl lakes, and may be compared to the pages of a book, each containing a history of a certain period of the past. The different layers may be grouped together in beds from a foot to a foot and a half in thickness, which are distinguished by differences of composition and colour, the tints being white, green, and brown. Occasionally there is a parting layer of pure flint, or of black carbonaceous vegetable matter, about an inch thick, or of white pulverulent marl. We find several hills in the neighbourhood of Aurillac composed of such materials for the height of more than 200 feet from their base, the whole sometimes covered by rocky currents of trachytic or basaltic lava.*

Thus wonderfully minute are the separate parts of which some of the most massive geological monuments are made up! When we desire to classify, it is necessary to contemplate entire groups of strata in the aggregate; but if we wish to understand the mode of their formation, and to explain their origin, we must think only of the minute subdivisions of which each mass is composed. We must bear in mind how many thin leaf-like seams of matter, each containing the remains of myriads of testacea and plants, frequently enter into the composition of a single stratum, and how vast a succession of these strata unite to form a single group! We must remember also, that volcanos like the Plomb du Cantal, which rises in the immediate neighbourhood of Aurillac, are themselves equally the result of successive accumulation, consisting of reiterated flows of lava and showers of scorix; and I have shown, when treating of the high antiquity of Etna, how many distinct lava-currents and heaps of ejected substances are required to make up one of the numerous conical envelopes whereof a volcano is composed.—Lastly, we must not forget that continents and mountain-chains, colossal as are their dimensions, are nothing more than an assemblage of many such igneous and aqueous groups, formed in succession during an indefinite lapse of ages, and superimposed upon each other.

* Lyell and Murchison, sur les Dépôts Lacust. Tertiaires du Cantal, &c. Ann. des Sci. Nat., Oct. 1829.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EOCENE FORMATIONS—PARIS BASIN.

Marine Eocene strata—Paris basin how far analogous to deposits of Central France—Connexion of Auvergne and Paris basins—Groups in Paris basin—Observations of M. C. Prevost—Contemporaneous marine and freshwater strata—Abundance of *Cerithia* (p. 373.)—Upper marine formation—All the Parisian groups Eocene—Microscopic shells (p. 377.)—Bones of quadrupeds in gypsum—Strata with and without organic remains alternating—Extent of our knowledge of the physical geography, fauna, and flora of the Eocene period—Concluding remarks.

THE geologist who has studied the lacustrine formations described in the last chapter cannot enter the tract usually termed “the Paris Basin” without immediately recognising a great variety of rocks with which his eye has already become familiar. The green and white marls of Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay, again present themselves, together with limestones and quartzose grits, siliceous and gypseous marls, nodules and layers of flint, and saccharoid gypsum; lastly, in addition to all this identity of mineral character, he finds an assemblage of the same species of fossil animals and plants.

When we consider the geographical proximity of the two districts, we are the more prepared to ascribe this correspondence in the mineral composition of these groups to a combination of similar circumstances at the same era. From the Map (Fig. 144., ante, p. 359) in the last chapter, it will be seen that the united waters of the Allier and Loire, after descending from the valleys occupied by the freshwater formations of Central France, flow on till they reach the southern extremity of what is called the Paris basin. M. Omalius d’Halloy long ago suggested the very natural idea that there existed formerly a chain of lakes, reaching from the highest part of the central mountain-group of France, and terminating in the basin of Paris, which he supposes was at that time an arm of the sea.

Notwithstanding the great changes which the physical geography of this part of France must since have undergone, we may easily conceive that many of the principal features in the configuration of the country may have remained unchanged, or but slightly modified. Hills of volcanic matter have indeed been formed since the Eocene formations were accumulated, and the levels of large tracts have been altered in relation to the sea; lakes have been drained, and a gulf of the sea turned into dry land, but many of the reciprocal relations of the different parts of the surface may still remain the same. The waters which flowed from the granitic heights into the Eocene lakes may now descend in the same manner through valleys once the basins of those lakes. Let us, for illustration,

suppose the great Canadian lakes, and the gulf into which their waters are discharged, to be elevated and laid dry by subterranean movements. The whole hydrographical basin of the St. Lawrence might be upraised during these convulsions, yet that river might continue, even after so extraordinary a revolution, to drain the same elevated regions, and might still convey its waters in the same direction from the interior of the continent to the Atlantic. Instead of traversing the lakes, it would hold its course through deposits of lacustrine sand and shelly marl, such as we know to be now forming in Lakes Superior and Erie; and these fresh-water strata would occupy the site, and bear testimony to the pristine existence of the lakes. Marine strata may also be brought into view in the space where an inlet of the sea, like the estuary of the St. Lawrence, had once received the continental waters; and in such formations we might discover shells of lacustrine and fluviatile species intermingled with marine testacea and zoophytes.

Subdivisions of strata in the Paris basin.—The area which has been called the Paris basin is about 180 miles in its greatest length from north-east to south-west, and about ninety miles from east to west. This space may be described as a depression in the chalk (see Fig. 82., ante, p. 202), which has been filled up by alternating groups of marine and fresh-water strata. MM. Cuvier and Brongniart attempted in 1811 to distinguish five different formations, and to arrange them in the following order, beginning with the lowest:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. First freshwater formation. | { Plastic clay.
Lignite.
First sandstone. |
| 2. First marine formation. | { Calcaire grossier. |
| 3. Second freshwater formation. | { Siliceous limestone.
Gypsum, with bones of animals.
Freshwater marls. |
| 4. Second marine formation. | { Gypseous marine marls.
Upper marine sands and sandstones.
Upper marine marls and limestones. |
| 5. Third freshwater formation. | { Siliceous millstone, without shells.
Siliceous millstone, with shells.
Upper freshwater marls. |

These formations were supposed to have been deposited in succession upon the chalk; and it was imagined that the waters of the ocean had been by turns admitted into and excluded from the same region. But the subsequent investigations of several geologists, especially of M. Constant Prevost,* have led to great modifications in the theoretical views entertained respecting the order in which the several groups were formed; and it now appears that the formations Nos. 1, 2, and 3, of the table of MM.

* Bulletin des Sci. de la Soc. Philom., May, 1835, p. 74.

Cuvier and Brongniart, instead of having originated one after the other, are divisible into four nearly contemporaneous groups.

Superposition of different formations in the Paris basin.—A comparison of the two accompanying diagrams will show at a glance the different relations which the several sets of strata bear to each other, according to the original as well as the more modern classification. I shall now proceed to lay before the reader a brief sketch of the several sets of strata referred to in the above systems.

Fig. 150.
M. A. Brongniart.

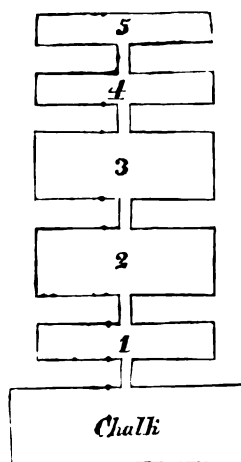
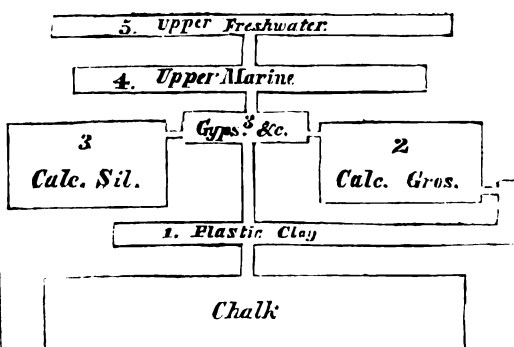


Fig. 151.
M. Constant Prevost.



Immediately upon the chalk a layer of broken chalk flints, often cemented into a breccia by siliceous sand, is very commonly found. These flints probably indicate the action of the sea upon reefs of chalk when a portion of that rock had emerged, and before the regular tertiary beds were superimposed. To this partial layer no reference is made in the annexed sections.

Plastic clay and sand.—Upon this flinty stratum, or, if it be wanting upon the chalk itself, rests frequently a deposit of clay and lignite (No. 1. of the above tables). It includes the remains of freshwater shells and drift-wood, and was, at first, regarded as a proof that the Paris basin had originally been filled with fresh water. But it has since been shown that this group is not only of very partial extent, but is by no means restricted to a fixed place in the series; for it alternates with the marine calcaire grossier (No. 2. of the tables), and is repeated in the very middle of that limestone at Veaugirard, Bagneux, and other places, where the same Planorbis, Paludina and Limnea occur.* M. Desnoyers pointed out to me a section in the suburbs of Paris, laid open in 1829, where a similar intercalation was seen in a still higher part of the calcaire grossier.

* Prevost, Sur les Submersions Itératives, &c. Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris, tome iv. p. 74.

These observations relieve us from the difficulty of seeking a cause why vegetable matter, and certain species of freshwater shells and a particular kind of clay, were at first introduced into the basin, and why the same space was subsequently usurped by the sea. A minute examination of the phenomena leads us simply to infer, that a river charged with argillaceous sediment entered a bay of the sea and drifted into it, from time to time, freshwater shells and wood.

Calcaire grossier.—The calcaire grossier above alluded to, is a coarse limestone, often passing into sand, such as may perhaps have been in part derived from the aqueous degradation of a chalk country. It contains by far the greater number of the fossil shells which characterize the Paris basin. No less than four hundred distinct species have been procured from a single spot near Grignon. They are imbedded in a calcareous sand, chiefly formed of comminuted shells, in which, nevertheless, individuals in a perfect state of preservation, both of marine, terrestrial, and freshwater species, are mingled together, and were evidently transported from a distance. Some of the marine shells may have lived on the spot; but the *Cyclostoma* and *Limnea* must have been brought thither by rivers and currents, and the quantity of triturated shells implies considerable movement in the waters.

Nothing is more striking in this assemblage of fossil testacea than the great proportion of species referable to the genus *Cerithium*. (See Fig. 152.) There occur no less than one hundred and thirty-seven species of this genus in the Paris basin, and almost all of them in the calcaire grossier. Now the living testacea of this genus inhabit the sea near the mouths of rivers, where the waters are brackish, so that their abundance in the marine strata of the Paris basin is in perfect harmony with the hypothesis before advanced, that a river flowed into the gulf, and gave



*Cerithium cinctum**.

rise to the beds of clay and lignite before mentioned. But there are ample data for inferring that the gulf was supplied with fresh water by more than one river; for while the calcaire grossier occupies the northern part of the Paris basin, another contemporaneous deposit, of freshwater origin, appears at the southern extremity.

Calcaire siliceux.—This group (No. 3. of the foregoing tables) is a compact siliceous limestone, which resembles a precipitate from the waters of mineral springs. It is often traversed by small empty sinuous cavities; is for the most part devoid of organic remains, but in some places contains freshwater and land species, and never any marine fossils. The siliceous limestone and the calcaire grossier occupy distinct

* This species is found also in the Paris and London basins.

parts of the basin, the one attaining its fullest development in those places where the other is of slight thickness. They also alternate with each other towards the centre of the basin, as at Sergy and Osny ; and there are even points where the two rocks are so blended together, that portions of each may be seen in hand specimens. Thus in the same bed, at Triel, we have the compact freshwater limestone, characterized by its *Limnæ*, mingled with the coarse marine limestone through which the small multilocular shell, called *milliolite*, is dispersed in countless numbers. These microscopic testacea are also accompanied by *Cerithia* and other shells of the *calcaire grossier*. It is very extraordinary that in this instance both kinds of sediment must have been thrown down together on the same spot, and each has still retained its own peculiar organic remains. This limestone was pointed out to me by M. Prevost, both *in situ* at Triel, and in hand specimens in his cabinet.

These facts lead irresistibly to the conclusion, that while to the north, where the bay was probably open to the sea, a marine limestone was formed, another deposit of freshwater origin was introduced to the southward, or at the head of the bay ; for it appears that during the Eocene period, as now, the ocean was to the north ; and the continent, where the great lakes existed, to the south. From that southern region we may suppose a body of fresh water to have descended charged with carbonate of lime and silica, the water being perhaps in sufficient volume to convert the upper end of the bay into fresh water, like some of the gulfs of the Baltic.

Gypsum and marls.—The next group to be considered is the gypsum, and the white and green marls, subdivisions of No. 3. of the table of Cuvier and Brongniart. These were once supposed to be entirely subsequent in origin to the two groups already considered ; but M. Prevost has pointed out that in some localities they alternate repeatedly with the *calcaire siliceux*, and in others with some of the upper members of the *calcaire grossier*. The gypsum, with its associated marl and limestone, is in greatest force towards the centre of the basin, where the two groups before mentioned are less fully developed ; but M. Prevost infers, that while those two principal deposits were gradually in progress, the one towards the north, and the other towards the south, a river descending from the east may have brought down the gypseous and marly sediment.

It must be admitted, as highly probable, that a bay, or narrow sea, 180 miles in length, would receive, at more points than one, the waters of the adjoining continent ; at the same time I may observe, that if the gypsum and associated green and white marls of Montmartre were derived from a hydrographical basin distinct from that of the southern chain of lakes before adverted to, this basin must nevertheless have been placed under circumstances exceedingly similar ; for the identity of the rocks of Velay and Auvergne with the freshwater group of Montmartre, is such as can

scarcely be appreciated by geologists who have not carefully examined the structure of both these countries.

Some readers may think that the view above given of the arrangement of four different sets of strata in the Paris basin is far more obscure and complicated than that first presented to them in the system of MM. Cuvier and Brongniart. Undoubtedly the relations of the several groups are less simple than the first observers supposed, being much more analogous to those before described in the lacustrine deposits of Central France. The simultaneous deposition of two or more groups of strata in one basin, some of them freshwater and others marine, must always produce very complex results; but in proportion as it is more difficult in these cases to discover any fixed order of superposition in the associated mineral masses, so also is it more easy to explain the manner of their origin, and to reconcile their relations to the agency of known causes. Instead of the successive irruptions and retreats of the sea, and changes in the chemical nature of the fluid, and other speculations of the earlier geologists, we are now simply called upon to imagine a gulf, into one extremity of which the sea entered, and at the other a large river, while other streams may have flowed in at different points, whereby an indefinite number of alternations of marine and freshwater beds would be occasioned.

Second or Upper marine group.—The next group, called the second or upper marine formation (No. 4. of the tables,) consists in its lower division of green marls, which alternate with the freshwater beds of gypsum and marl last described. Above this division the products of the sea exclusively predominate, the beds being chiefly formed of micaceous and quartzose sand, eighty feet or more in thickness, surmounted by beds of sandstone, with scarcely any limestone. The summits of a great many platforms and hills in the Paris basin consist of this upper marine series.

I fully agree with M. C. Prevost that the alternation of the various marine and freshwater formations before described admit of a satisfactory explanation without supposing different retreats and subsequent returns of the sea; yet I think that a subsidence of the soil would best account for the position of these upper marine sands. Oscillations of level may have occurred, in consequence of which the sea and a river may have prevailed each in their turn for a time, until at length, by a more considerable sinking down of part of the basin, a tract previously occupied by freshwater was converted into a sea of moderate depth.

In one part of the Paris basin there are decisive proofs that during the Eocene period, and before the upper marine sand was formed, parts of the calcaire grossier were exposed to the action of denuding causes. At Valmondois, for example, a deposit of the upper marine sandstone is found, in which rolled blocks of the calcaire grossier with its peculiar fossils, and fragments of a limestone resembling the calcaire siliceux,

occur.* These calcareous boulders are rolled and pierced by perforating shells belonging to no less than fifteen distinct species. Both the blocks and many worn shells washed out from the calcaire grossier, are found mingled with the ordinary fossils of the upper marine sand.

We have seen that the same earthquake in Cutch could raise one part of the delta of the Indus and depress another, and cause the river to cut a passage through the upraised strata, and carry down the materials removed from the new channel into the sea. All these changes, therefore, might happen within a short interval of time between the deposition of two sets of strata in the same delta.†

It is not improbable, then, that the same convulsions which caused one part of the Paris basin to sink down, so as to let in the sea upon the area previously covered by gypsum and freshwater marl, may have lifted up the calcaire grossier and the siliceous limestone, so that they might be acted upon by the waves, and fragments of them swept down into the contiguous sea, there to be drilled by boring testacea.

It is observed that the older marine formation at Laon is now raised three hundred metres, or nearly one thousand feet above the sea, whereas the upper marine sands never attain half that elevation. Such may possibly have been the relative altitude of the two groups when the newest of them were deposited.

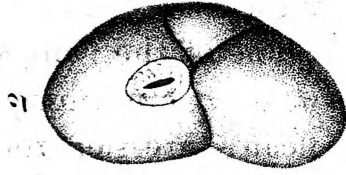
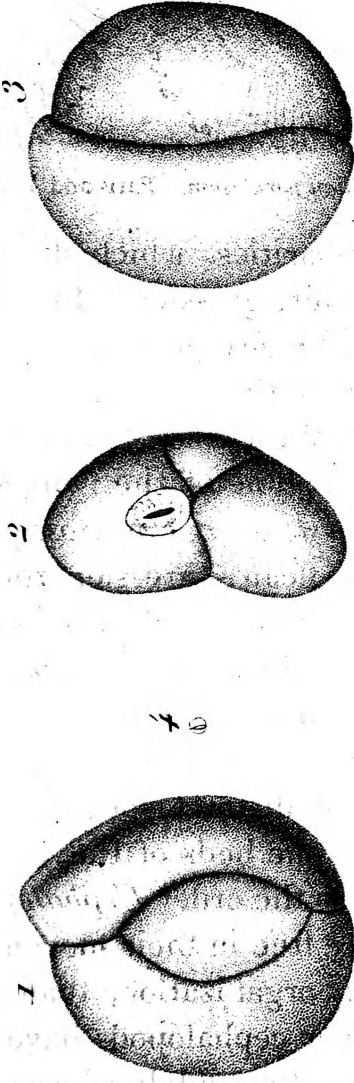
Third freshwater formation.—We have still to consider another formation, the third freshwater group (No. 5. of the preceding tables). It consists of marls interstratified with beds of flint and layers of flinty nodules. One set of siliceous layers is destitute of organic remains, the other replete with them.

Gyrogenites, or fossil seed-vessels of charæ, are found abundantly in these strata; and all the animal and vegetable remains agree well with the hypothesis, that after the gulf or estuary had been silted up with the sand of the upper marine formation, a great number of marshes and shallow lakes existed, like those which frequently overspread the newest parts of a delta. These lakes were fed by rivers or springs which contained, in chemical solution or mechanical suspension, such kinds of sediment as we have already seen to have been deposited in the lakes of Central France during the Eocene period.

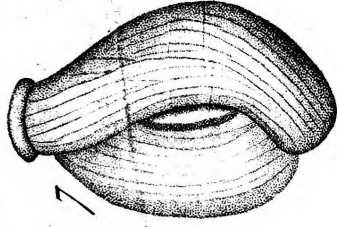
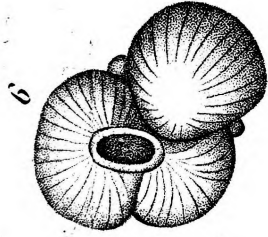
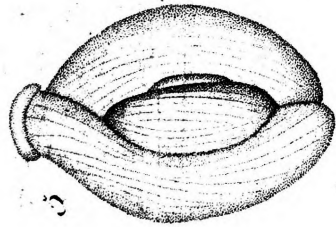
The Parisian groups all Eocene.—Having now given a rapid sketch of the different groups of the Paris basin, I may observe generally that they all belong to the Eocene epoch, although the entire series must doubtless have required an immense lapse of ages for its accumulation.

* M. Deshayes, Mémoires de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris, tom. i. p. 243. The sandstone is there called, by mistake, grès marin *inférieur*, instead of *supérieur*, to which last the author has since ascertained it to belong.

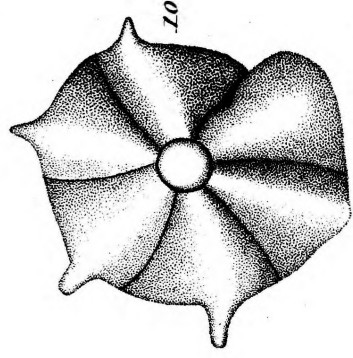
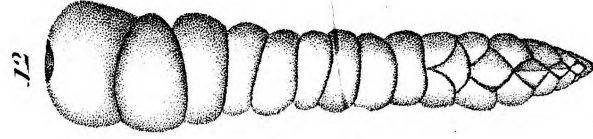
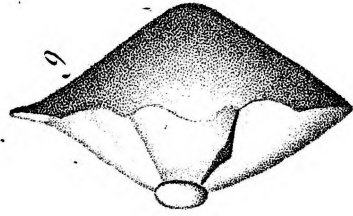
† Vol. I. pp. 382, 383.



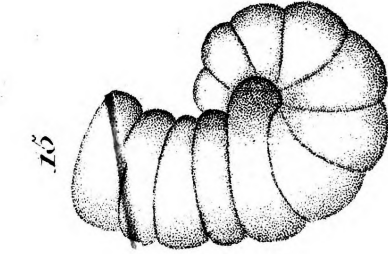
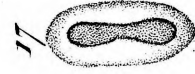
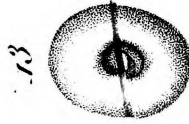
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18

MICROSCOPIC FOSSIL SHELLS.

EOCENE TERTIARY PERIOD.

PARLIS PLATE 17

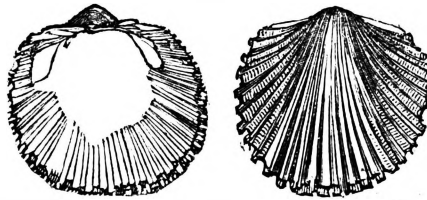
1. 2. 3. 4. - *Trileculina inflata*. Desh. - 5. 6. 7. 8. *Quinguliscutina striata*. Desh.
9. 10. 11. *Calcarina crispata*. Desh. - 12. 13. 14. *Navulina corrugata*. Desh.
15. 16. 17. 18. *Spirulina stenostoma*. Desh.

London, Published by John Murray, Decr 1831.

The shells of the different freshwater groups, constituting at once some of the lowest and uppermost members of the series, are nearly all referable to the same species, and the discordance between the marine testacea of the calcaire grossier and the upper marine sands is very inconsiderable.

A curious observation has been made by M. Deshayes, in reference to the changes which one species, the *Cardium porulosum*, has undergone during the long period of its existence in the Paris basin. Different varieties of this cardium are characteristic of different strata. In the older sand of the Soissonais (a marine formation underlying the regular beds of the calcaire grossier), this shell acquires but a small volume, and has

Fig. 153.

*Cardium porulosum*. Paris and London basins.

many peculiarities, which disappear in the lowest beds of the calcaire grossier. In these the shell attains its full size, and many peculiarities of form, which are again modified in the uppermost beds of the calcaire grossier; and these last characters are preserved throughout the whole of the "upper marine" series.*

Miliolite limestone and microscopic shells.—In some parts of the calcaire grossier round Paris, certain beds occur of a stone used in building, and called by the French geologists *miliolite limestone*. It is almost entirely made up of millions of small shells of the size of minute grains of sand, which all belong to the same class, but are of distinct species from those found in the Older Pliocene beds of Italy. These minute fossil bodies consist of multilocular shells, which were formerly referred to the order *Cephalopoda*, by M. D'Orbigny, but M. Dujardin has shown that some of them do certainly not belong to that order. They were separated by D'Orbigny from the nautilus and ammonite, by their having no siphon or internal tube connecting the different chambers, and were called by him Foraminifera. They are often in an excellent state of preservation, and their forms are singularly different from those of the larger testacea.

A plate of some of these is given, from unpublished drawings by M. Deshayes, who has carefully selected the most remarkable types of form. The *natural size* of each species figured (Plate XIII.) is indicated by such minute points, that it is necessary to call attention to them, as they

* Coquilles caractérist. des Terrains, 1831.

might otherwise be overlooked. It should also be mentioned that the genus *miliolite* of Lamarck has since been subdivided into several genera, among which are the *Triloculina* and *Quinqueloculina* figured in the plate (Pl. XIII.).

Characteristic shells.—The species of shells figured in the annexed plate are common in the Paris basin, and may be considered as characteristic of the Eocene period generally. They appear as yet to be exclusively confined to deposits of that period, and are for the most part abundant in them wherever they have been attentively studied. (Pl. XIV.)

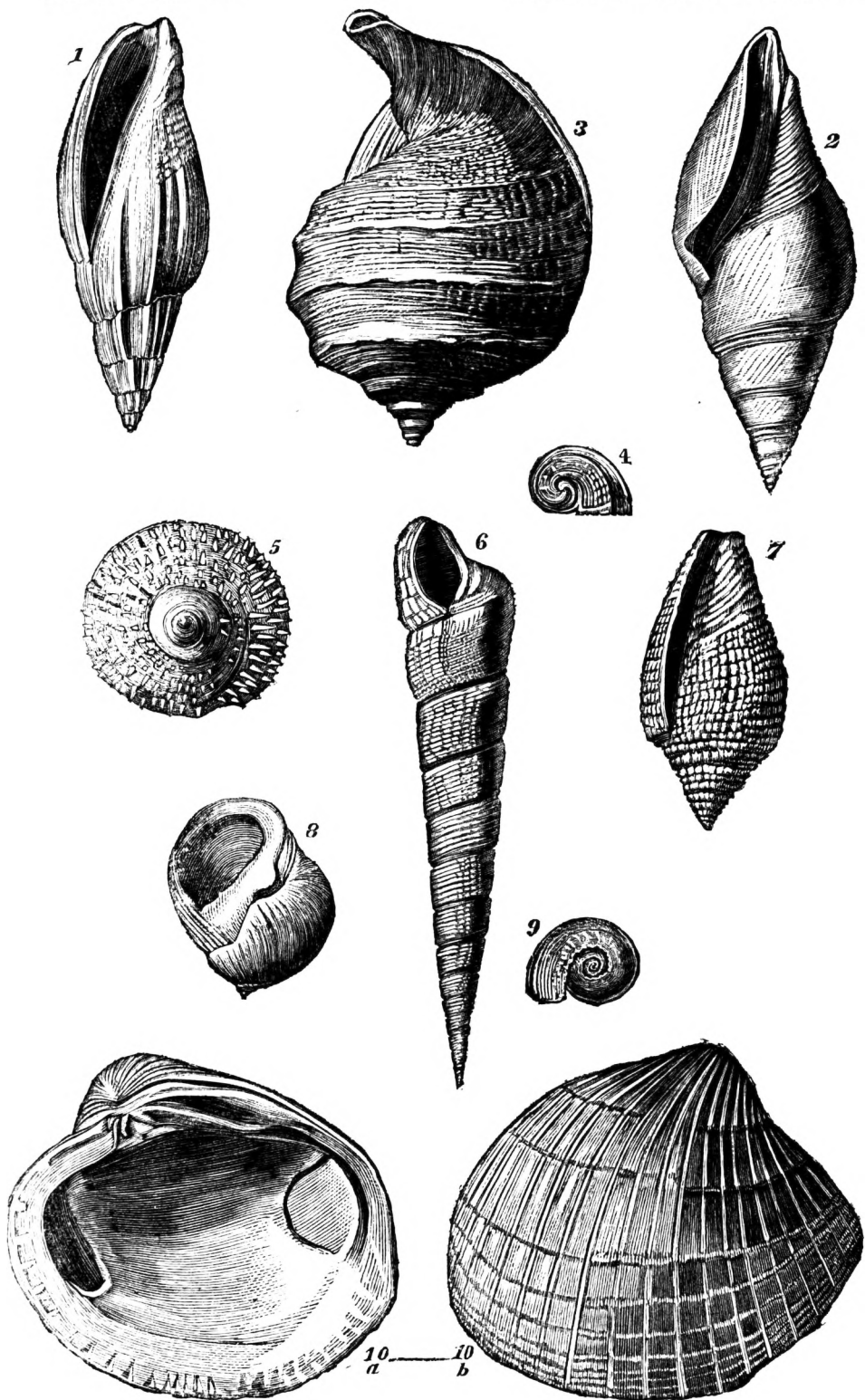
Bones of quadrupeds in gypsum.—I have already considered the position of the gypsum which occurs in the form of a saccharoid rock in the hill of Montmartre at Paris, and other central parts of the basin. At the base of that hill it is seen distinctly to alternate with soft marly beds of the *calcaire grossier*, in which *cerithia* and other marine shells occur. But the great mass of gypsum may be considered as a purely freshwater deposit, containing land and fluviatile shells, together with fragments of palm-wood, and great numbers of skeletons of quadrupeds and birds, an assemblage of organic remains which has given great celebrity to the Paris basin. The bones of freshwater fish, also, and of crocodiles, and many land and fluviatile reptiles, occur in this rock. The skeletons of mammalia are usually isolated, often entire, the most delicate extremities being preserved, as if the carcasses, clothed with their flesh and skin, had been floated down soon after death, and while they were still swollen by the gases generated by their first decomposition. The few accompanying shells are of those light kinds which frequently float on the surface of rivers together with wood.

M. Prevost has therefore suggested that a river may have swept away the bodies of animals, and the plants which lived on its borders, or in the lakes which it traversed, and may have carried them down into the centre of the gulf into which flowed the waters impregnated with sulphate of lime. We know that the *Fiume Salso* in Sicily enters the sea so charged with various salts that the thirsty cattle refuse to drink of it. A stream of sulphureous water, as white as milk, descends into the sea from the volcanic mountain of *Idienne*, on the east of Java; and a great body of hot water, charged with sulphuric acid, rushed down from the same volcano on one occasion, and inundated a large tract of country, destroying, by its noxious properties, all the vegetation.* In like manner the *Pusanibio*, or “*Vinegar River*,” of Colombia, which rises at the foot of *Puracé*, an extinct volcano, 7500 feet above the level of the sea, is strongly impregnated with sulphuric and muriatic acids, and with oxide of iron. We may easily suppose the waters of such streams to have properties

* *Leyde Magaz. voor Wetensch Konst en Lett.*, partie v. cahier i. p. 71. Cited by Rozet, *Journ. de Géologie*, tom. i. p. 43.

FOSSIL SHELLS.

EOCENE TERTIARY PERIOD.



1. *Voluta costaria*, Lamk.
2. *Pleurotoma clavicularis*.
3. *Cassidaria carinata*, Lamk.
4. *Nerita tricarinata*, Lamk.

6. *Turritella imbricata*, Lamk.
7. *Voluta digitalina*, Lamk.
8. *Natica epiglottina*, Lamk.
9. *Solarium canaliculatum*, Lamk.

noxious to marine animals, and in this manner the entire absence of marine remains in the ossiferous gypsum may be explained.*

There are no pebbles or coarse sand in the gypsum; a circumstance which agrees well with the hypothesis that these beds were precipitated from water holding sulphate of lime in solution, and floating the remains of different animals. The bones of land quadrupeds, however, are not confined entirely to the freshwater formation to which the gypsum belongs; for the remains of a *Palæotherium*, together with some freshwater shells, have been found in a marine stratum belonging to the *calcaire grossier* at Beauchamp.

In the gypsum the remains of about fifty species of quadrupeds have been found, all extinct, and nearly four-fifths of them belonging to a division of the order *Pachydermata*, which is now represented by only four living species; namely, three tapirs and the daman of the Cape. With them a few carnivorous animals are associated, among which are a species of fox and gennet. Of the *Rodentia*, a dormouse and a squirrel; of the *Insectivora*, a bat; and of the *Marsupialia* (an order now confined to America, Australia, and some contiguous islands), an opossum, have been discovered.

Of birds, about ten species have been ascertained, the skeletons of some of which are entire. None of them are referable to existing species.† The same remark applies to the fish, according to MM. Cuvier and Agassiz, as also to the reptiles. Among the last are crocodiles and tortoises of the genera *Emys* and *Trionix*.

The tribe of land quadrupeds most abundant in this formation is such as now inhabits alluvial plains and marshes, and the banks of rivers and lakes, a class most exposed to suffer by river inundations. Whether the disproportion of carnivorous animals can be ascribed to this cause, or whether they were comparatively small in number and dimensions, as in the indigenous fauna of Australia, when first known to Europeans, is a point on which it would be rash, perhaps, to offer an opinion in the present state of our knowledge.

We have no reason to be surprised that all the species of vertebrated animals hitherto observed are extinct, when we recollect that out of 1122 species of fossil testacea obtained from the Paris basin, thirty-eight only can be identified with species now living. I have more than once adverted to the fact, that extinct mammalia are often found associated with assemblages of *recent* shells, a fact from which I have inferred the inferior duration of species of the mammalia as compared with the testacea; and it is not improbable that the higher order of animals in general may more readily become extinct than the marine mollusca. Some of the thirty-eight species of testacea above alluded to, as having survived from the

* M. C. Prevost, *Submersions Itératives*, &c. Note 23.

† Cuvier, *Oss. Foss.*, tom. iii. p. 255.

Eocene period to our own times, have now a wide geographical range, as, for example, *Lucina divaricata*,* and are therefore fitted to exist under a great variety of circumstances. On the other hand, the great proportion of the Eocene marine testacea which have become extinct sufficiently demonstrates that the loss of species has been due to general laws; and that a sudden catastrophe, such as the invasion of a whole continent by the sea—a cause which could annihilate only the terrestrial and freshwater tribes—is an hypothesis wholly inadequate to account for the phenomenon.

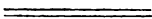
Strata with and without organic remains alternating.—Between the gypsum of the Paris basin and the upper marine sands a thin bed of oysters is found, which is spread over a remarkably wide area. From the manner in which they lie, it is inferred that they did not grow on the spot, but that some current swept them away from a bed of oysters formed in some other part of the bay. The strata of sand which immediately repose on the oyster-bed are quite destitute of organic remains; and nothing is more common in the Paris basin and in other formations, than alternations of shelly beds with others entirely devoid of them. The temporary extinction and renewal of animal life at successive periods have been inferred from such phenomena, which may nevertheless be explained, as M. Prevost justly remarks, without appealing to any such extraordinary revolutions in the state of the animate creation. A current one day scoops out a channel in a bed of shelly sand and mud, and the next day, by a slight alteration of its course, ceases to prey upon the same bank. It may then become charged with sand unmixed with shells, derived from some dune, or brought down by a river. In the course of ages an indefinite number of transitions from shelly strata to those without shells may thus be caused.

Concluding remarks.—It will be seen by our observations on Auvergne and other parts of Central France, and on the districts round Paris, that geologists have already gained a considerable insight into the state of the physical geography of part of Europe during the Eocene period. We can point to some districts where lakes and rivers then existed, and to the site of some of the lands encircling those lakes, and to the position of a great bay of the sea, into which their surplus waters were discharged. We can also show, as I shall endeavour to explain in the next chapter, the points where some volcanic eruptions took place. Much information has been acquired respecting the quadrupeds which inhabited the land at that period, and concerning the reptiles, fishes, and testacea which swarmed in the waters of lakes and rivers; and we have a collection of the marine Eocene shells more complete than has yet been obtained from any existing sea of equal extent in Europe. Nor are the contemporary fossil plants altogether unknown to us, which, like the animals, are of extinct species, and indicate a warmer climate than that now prevailing in the same latitudes.

* See Fig. 85., ante, p. 225.

When we reflect on the tranquil state of the earth, implied by some of the lacustrine and marine deposits of this age, and consider the fulness of all the different classes of the animal kingdom, as deduced from the study of the fossil remains, we are naturally led to conclude, that the earth was at that period in a perfectly settled state, and already fitted for the habitation of man.

The heat of European latitudes during the Eocene period does not seem to have been superior, if equal, to that now experienced between the tropics ; some *living* species of molluscous animals, both of the land, the lake, and the sea, existed when the strata of the Paris basin were formed ; and the contrast in the organization of the various tribes of Eocene animals, when compared to those now co-existing with man, although striking, is not, perhaps, so great as between the living Australian and European types. At the same time, we must be fully aware that we cannot reason with any confidence on the capability of our own, or any other contemporary species, to exist under circumstances so different as those which might be caused by an entirely new distribution of land and sea ; and we know that in the earlier tertiary periods the physical geography of the northern hemisphere was very distinct. Our inability to account for the atmospheric and other latent causes, which often give rise to the most destructive epidemics, proves the extent of our ignorance of the entire assemblage of conditions requisite for the existence of any one species on the globe.



CHAPTER XIX.

EOCENE VOLCANIC ROCKS.

Volcanic rocks of Auvergne—Eruptions at successive periods—Mont Dor an extinct volcano—Velay—Plomb du Cantal, (p. 385.)—Train of minor volcanos stretching from Auvergne to the Vivarais—Monts Domes—Ravines excavated through lava—Alluviums of distinct ages (p. 388.)—Age of more modern lavas of Central France—No eruption during the historical era—Division of volcanos into ante-diluvian and post-diluvian inadmissible—Theories respecting the effects of the Flood considered (p. 392.)—Recapitulation.

IN treating of the lacustrine deposits of Central France, in the seventeenth chapter, I omitted, in order to avoid confusion, all details respecting the associated volcanic rocks, to which I now recall the reader's attention. (See the Map, ante, p. 359.)

It was stated that, in the arenaceous and pebbly group of the lacustrine basins of Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay, no volcanic pebbles had ever been detected, although massive piles of igneous rocks are now found in the immediate vicinity. As this observation has been confirmed by minute research, we are warranted in inferring that the volcanic eruptions had not commenced when the older subdivisions of the freshwater groups originated.

In Cantal and Velay no decisive proofs have yet been brought to light that any of the igneous outbursts happened during the deposition of the freshwater strata; but there can be no doubt that in Auvergne some volcanic explosions took place before the drainage of the lakes, and at a time when the Eocene species of animals and plants still flourished. I shall first advert to these proofs, as relating to the history of the period under consideration, and shall then proceed to show that there are in the same country volcanic rocks of much newer date, some of which appear to be referable to the Miocene era.

Volcanic rocks associated with lacustrine in Auvergne.—The first locality to which I shall call the reader's attention is Pont du Château, near Clermont, which spot, as well as others in Auvergne, mentioned in this chapter, I examined, with Mr. Murchison, in 1828. The section is seen in a precipice on the right bank of the river Allier. Here beds of volcanic tuff alternate with a freshwater limestone, which is in some places pure, but in others spotted with fragments of volcanic matter, as if it were deposited while showers of sand and scorix were projected from a neighbouring vent.* This limestone contains the *Helix Ramondi* and other shells of Eocene species. It is immaterial to the present argument whether the volcanic sand was showered down from above, or drifted to the spot by a river; for the latter opinion must presuppose the country to have been covered with volcanic ejections during the Eocene period.

Another example occurs in the Puy de Marmont, near Veyres, where a freshwater marl alternates with volcanic tuff containing Eocene shells. The tuff or breccia in this locality is precisely such as is known to result from volcanic ashes falling into water, and subsiding together with ejected fragments of marl and other stratified rocks. These tuffs and marls are highly inclined, and traversed by a thick vein of basalt, which, as it rises in the hill, divides into two branches.

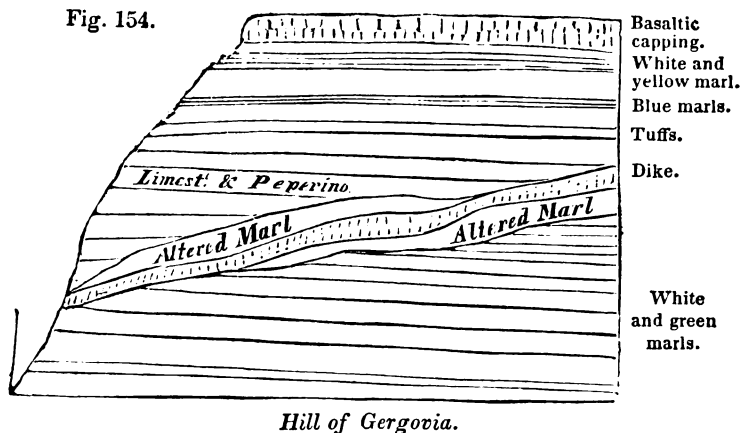
Gergovia.—The hill of Gergovia, near Clermont, affords a third example. I agree with MM. Dufrénoy and Jobert that there is no alternation here of lava and freshwater strata, in the manner supposed by some other observers;† but the position and contents of some of the tuffs prove them to have been derived from volcanic eruptions which occurred during the deposition of the Eocene formations.

* See Scrope's Central France, p. 21.

† Ibid. p. 7.

The bottom of the hill consists of slightly inclined beds of white and greenish marls, more than three hundred feet in thickness, intersected by a dike of basalt, which may be studied in the ravine above the village of Merdogne. The dike here cuts through the marly strata at a considerable angle, producing, in general, great alteration and confusion in them for

Fig. 154.



some distance from the point of contact. Above the white and green marls, a series of beds of limestone and marl, containing freshwater shells, are seen to alternate with volcanic tuff. In the lowest part of this division beds of pure marl alternate with compact fissile tuff, resembling some of the subaqueous tuffs of Italy and Sicily called *peperinos*. Occasionally fragments of scorix are visible in this rock. Still higher is seen another group of some thickness, consisting exclusively of tuff, upon which lie other marly strata intermixed with volcanic matter.

There are many points in Auvergne where igneous rocks have been forced by subsequent injection through clays and marly limestones, in such a manner that the whole has become blended in one confused and brecciated mass, between which and the basalt there is sometimes no very distinct line of demarcation. In the cavities of such mixed rocks we often find calcedony, and crystals of mesotype, stilbite, and arragonite. To formations of this class may belong some of the breccias immediately adjoining the dike in the hill of Gergovia; but it cannot be contended that the volcanic sand and scorix interstratified with the marls and limestones in the upper part of that hill were introduced, like the dike, subsequently, by intrusion from below. They must have been thrown down like sediment from water, and can only have resulted from igneous action, which was going on contemporaneously with the deposition of the lacustrine strata.

The reader will bear in mind that this conclusion agrees well with the proofs, adverted to in the seventeenth chapter, of the abundance of siliceous

travertin, and gypsum precipitated when the upper lacustrine strata were formed ; for these rocks are such as the waters of mineral and thermal springs might generate.

The igneous products above mentioned, as associated with the lacustrine strata, form the lowest members of the great series of volcanic rocks of Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay, which repose for the most part on the granitic mountains (see Map, ante, p. 359). There was evidently a long succession of eruptions, beginning with those of the Eocene period, and ending, so far as can yet be inferred from the evidence derived from fossil remains, with those of the Miocene epoch. The oldest part of the two principal volcanic masses of Mont Dor and the Plomb du Cantal may perhaps belong to the Eocene period,—the newer portion of the same mountains to the Miocene ; just as Etna commenced its operations during the Newer Pliocene era, and has continued them down to the Recent epoch, and still retains its energy undiminished. There are some parts of the Mont Mezen, in Velay, which are perhaps of the same antiquity as the oldest parts of Mont Dor.

Besides these ancient rocks, of which the lavas are in a great measure trachytic, there are many minor cones in Central France, for the most part of posterior origin, which extend from Auvergne, in a direction north-west and south-east, through Velay, into the Vivarais, where they are seen in the basin of the Ardèche. This volcanic line does not pass by the Plomb du Cantal ; it was formed, as nearly as can be conjectured in the present imperfect state of our knowledge, during the Miocene period ; but there may probably be found, among these cones and their accompanying lavas, rocks of every intermediate age between the oldest and newest volcanic formations of Central France.

I shall first give a brief description of the Mont Dor and the Plomb du Cantal, and then pass on to the train of newer cones, examining the evidence at present obtained respecting their relative ages, and the light which they throw on the successive formation of alluviums and on the excavation of valleys.

Mont Dor.—Mont Dor, the most conspicuous of the volcanic masses of Auvergne, rests immediately on the granitic rocks standing apart from the freshwater strata.* This volcano rises suddenly to the height of several thousand feet above the surrounding platform, and retains the shape of a flattened and somewhat irregular cone, all the sides sloping more or less rapidly, until their inclination is gradually lost in the high plain around. This cone is composed of layers of scorïæ, pumice-stones, and their fine detritus, with interposed beds of trachyte and basalt, which descend often in uninterrupted currents, till they reach and spread them-

* See the Map, ante, p. 359.

selves round the base of the mountain.* Conglomerates also, composed of angular and rounded fragments of igneous rocks, are observed to alternate with the above ; and the various masses are seen to dip off from the central axis, and to lie parallel to the sloping flanks of the great cone, in the manner I have described when treating of Etna.

The summit of the mountain terminates in seven or eight rocky peaks, where no regular crater can now be traced, but where we may easily imagine one to have existed, which may have been shattered by earthquakes, and have suffered degradation by aqueous agents. Originally, perhaps, like the highest crater of Etna, it may have formed an insignificant feature in the great pile, and may frequently have been destroyed and renovated.

We cannot at present determine the age of the great mass of Mont Dor, because no organic remains have yet been found in the tuffs, except impressions of the leaves of trees of species not determined. Some of the lowest parts of the mountain are formed of white pumiceous tuffs, in which animal remains may perhaps be one day found. In the mean time, we may conclude that Mont Dor had no existence when the grits and conglomerates of the Limagne, which contain no volcanic materials, were formed ; but some of the earliest eruptions were, perhaps, contemporary with those described in the commencement of this chapter. To the latest of these eruptions, on the other hand, I refer those trachytic breccias of Mont Perrier which were shown in the sixteenth chapter (ante, p. 352) to alternate with Miocene alluviums.

Velay.—The observations of M. Bertrand de Doue have not yet established that any of the most ancient volcanos of Velay were in action during the Eocene period, although it is very probable that some of them may have been contemporaneous with the oldest of the Auvergne lavas. There are beds of gravel in Velay, as in Auvergne, covered by lava at different heights above the channels of the existing rivers. In the highest and most ancient of these alluviums the pebbles are exclusively of granitic rocks ; but in the newer, which are found at lower levels, they contain an intermixture of volcanic substances. I have already shown, in the sixteenth chapter, that, in the volcanic ejections and alluviums covered by the lavas of Velay, the bones of animals of Miocene species have been found, in which respect the phenomena accord perfectly with those of Auvergne.

Plomb du Cantal.—In regard to the age of the igneous rocks of the Cantal we are still less informed, and at present can merely affirm, that they overlie the Eocene lacustrine strata of that country. (See Map, ante, p. 359.) They form a great dome-shaped mass, which has evidently been accumulated, like the cone of Etna, during a long series of eruptions. It

* Scrope's Central France, p. 98.

is composed of trachytic, phonolitic, and basaltic lavas, tuffs, and conglomerates, or breccias, forming a mountain several thousand feet in height. Dikes also of phonolite, trachyte, and basalt are numerous, especially in the neighbourhood of the large cavity, probably once a crater, around which the loftiest summits of the Cantal are ranged circularly, few of them, except the Plomb du Cantal, rising far above the border or ridge of this supposed crater. A pyramidal hill, called the Puy Griou, occupies the middle of the cavity.* It is evident that the volcano of the Cantal broke out precisely on the site of the lacustrine deposit before described (Chapter xvii.), which had accumulated in a depression of a tract composed of micaceous schist. In the breccias, even to the very summit of the mountain, we find ejected masses of the freshwater beds, and sometimes fragments of flint, containing Eocene shells. Valleys radiate in all directions from the central heights of the mountain, increasing in size as they recede from those heights. Those of the Cer and Jourdanne, which are more than twenty miles in length, are of great depth, and lay open the geological structure of the mountain. No alternation of lavas with undisturbed Eocene strata has been observed, nor any tuffs containing freshwater shells, although some of these tuffs include fossil remains of terrestrial plants said to imply several distinct restorations of the vegetation of the mountain in the intervals between great periods of eruption. On the northern side of the Plomb du Cantal, at La Vissière, near Murat, is a spot, pointed out on the Map (ante, p. 359), where freshwater limestone and marl are seen covered by a thickness of about eight hundred feet of volcanic rock. Shifts are here seen in the strata of limestone and marl.†

Although it appears that the lavas of the Cantal are more recent than the freshwater formation of that country, it does not follow that they may not belong to the Eocene period. The lake may possibly have been drained by the earthquakes which preceded or accompanied the first eruptions, but the Eocene animals and plants may have continued to exist for a long series of ages, while the cone went on increasing in dimensions.

Train of minor volcanos.—I shall next consider those minor volcanos, before alluded to, which stretch in a long range from Auvergne to the Vivarais, and which appear for the most part to be of newer origin than the mountains above described. These volcanos were faithfully described, so early as the year 1802, by M. de Montlosier.‡ They have been thrown up in a great number of isolated points, and much resemble those scattered over the Phlegrean fields and the flanks of Etna. They have given rise chiefly to currents of basaltic lava, whereas those of Mont Dor and the Cantal are in great part trachytic. There are perhaps about 300

* Mém. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. i. p. 175.

† See Lyell and Murchison, Ann. des Sci. Nat., Oct. 1829.

‡ Théorie des Volc. d'Auvergne.—Clermont, An X.

of these minor cones in Central France ; but a part of them only occur in Auvergne, where some few are found at the bottom of valleys excavated through the more ancient lavas of Mont Dor, as the Puy de Tartaret, for example, whence issues a current of lava which, flowing into the bed of the river Couze, gave rise to the lake of Chambon. Here the more ancient columnar basalts of Auvergne are seen forming the upper portion of the precipices which bound the valley.

But the greater part of the minor cones of Auvergne are placed upon the granitic platform, where they form an irregular ridge, about eighteen miles in length and two in breadth. They are usually truncated at the summit, where the crater is often preserved entire, the lava having issued from the base of the hill. But frequently the crater is broken down on one side, where the lava has flowed out. The hills are composed of loose scorïæ, blocks of lava, lapilli, and puzzuolana, with fragments of trachyte and granite.

The lavas may be often traced from the crater to the nearest valley, where they usurp the channel of the river, which has often excavated a deep ravine through the basalt. We have thus an opportunity of contrasting the enormous degradation which the solid and massive rock has suffered by aqueous erosion, and the integrity of the cone of sand and ashes which has, in the mean time, remained uninjured on the neighbouring platform, where it was placed beyond the reach of the power of running water.

Puy de Côme.—The Puy de Côme and its lava-current, near Clermont, may be mentioned as one of the numerous illustrations of the phenomenon here alluded to.* This conical hill rises from the granitic platform, at an angle of about 40° , to the height of more than 900 feet. Its summit presents two distinct craters, one of them with a vertical depth of 250 feet. A stream of lava takes its rise at the western base of the hill, instead of issuing from either crater, and descends the granitic slope towards the present site of the town of Pont Gibaud. Thence it pours in a broad sheet down a steep declivity into the valley of the Sioule, filling the ancient river channel for the distance of more than a mile. The Sioule, thus dispossessed of its bed, has worked out a fresh one between the lava and the granite of its western bank ; and the excavation has disclosed, in one spot, a wall of columnar basalt about fifty feet high.†

The excavation of the ravine is still in progress, every winter some columns of basalt being undermined and carried down the channel of the river, and in the course of a few miles rolled to sand and pebbles. Meanwhile the cone of Côme remains stationary, its loose materials being

* Montlosier, *Théorie des Volc. d'Auvergne*. ch. ii.

† Scrope's *Central France*, p. 60, and plate.

protected by a dense vegetation, and the hill standing on a ridge not commanded by any higher ground whence floods of rain-water may descend.

Puy Rouge.—At another point, farther down the course of the Sioule, we find a second illustration of the same phenomenon in the Puy Rouge, a conical hill to the north of the village of Pranal. The cone is composed entirely of red and black scoriæ, tuff, and volcanic bombs. On its western side there is a worn-down crater, whence a powerful stream of lava has issued, and flowed into the valley of the Sioule. The river has since excavated a ravine through the lava and subjacent gneiss, to the depth of 400 feet.

On the upper part of the precipice forming the left side of this ravine, we see a great mass of black and red scoriaceous lava; below this a thin bed of gravel, evidently an ancient river-bed, now at an elevation of fifty feet above the channel of the Sioule. The gravel again rests upon gneiss, which has been eroded to the depth of fifty feet.* It is quite evident in this case, that, while the basalt was gradually undermined and carried away by the force of running water, the cone whence the lava issued escaped destruction, because it stood upon a platform of gneiss several hundred feet above the level of the valley in which the force of running water was exerted.

It is needless to multiply examples, or the Vivarais would supply many others equally striking. Among many I may instance the cone of Jaujac, and its lava-current, which is a counterpart of that near Pranal last mentioned.†

Lavas and alluviums of different ages.—We have seen that on the flanks of Etna, since the commencement of the present century, several currents of lava have flowed at the bottom of the Val del Bove, at the foot of precipices formed of more ancient lavas and tuffs. So we find in Auvergne that some streams of melted matter have flowed in valleys, the sides of which consist partly of older lavas. These are often seen capping the hills in broad sheets, resting sometimes on granite, sometimes on fresh-water strata.

Many of the earlier lavas of Auvergne flowed out upon the platform of granite before all the existing valleys had been excavated; others again spread themselves in broad sheets over the horizontal lacustrine deposit when these had been covered with gravel, probably soon after the drainage of the lakes. Great vicissitudes in the physical geography of the country must have taken place since the flowing of these ancient lavas; and it is evident that the changes were gradual and successive, caused

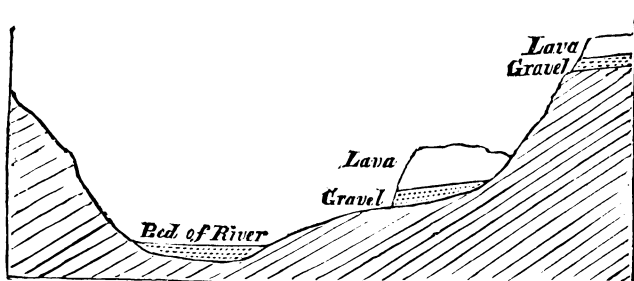
* See Lyell and Murchison on the Excavation of Valleys, Edin. New. Phil. Journ., July, 1829.

† Scrope's Central France, plate 14.

probably by the united agency of running water and subterranean movements. We frequently observe one mass of lava capping a hill, and a second at a lower elevation, forming a terrace on the side of a valley ; or sometimes occupying the bed of a river.

It is a most interesting fact, that in these cases beds of gravel almost invariably underlie the successive currents of lava, as in Catalonia, before described (pp. 329, 330). Occasionally, when the highest platform of lava is seven hundred or eight hundred feet above the lowest, we cannot fail to be struck with the wonderful alterations effected in the drainage of

Fig. 155.



Lavas of Auvergne resting on alluviums of different ages.

the country since the first current flowed ; for the most elevated alluviums must originally have been accumulated on the lowest levels of the then existing surface. As some geologists have referred almost all the superficial gravels to one era, and have supposed them to be the result of one sudden catastrophe, the phenomena of Auvergne here alluded to are very important. The flows of volcanic matter have, in fact, preserved portions of the surface in the state in which they existed at successive periods ; so that it is impossible to confound together the alluviums of different ages. The reader will see at once by reference to the wood-cut (Fig. 155.), that a considerable interval of time must have occurred between the formation of the uppermost bed of gravel and that next below it ; during which interval the uppermost lava was poured out, and a valley excavated, at the bottom of which the second bed of gravel accumulated. In like manner the pouring out of a second current of lava and a further deepening of the valley, took place between the date of the second gravel and that of the modern alluvium which now fills the channel of the river.*

When rivers are dispossessed of their channels by lava, they usually flow

* For localities in Central France where lavas or sheets of basalt repose on alluviums at different elevations above the present valleys, and for the inferences deducible from such facts, consult the works of MM. Le Grand d'Aussi, Montlosier, Ramond, Scrope, Bertrand de Douc, Croizet, Jobert, and Bouillet.

between the mass of lava and one side of the original valley. They there eat out a passage, partly through the volcanic and partly through the older formation; but as the soft tertiary marls in Auvergne give way more readily than the basalt, it is usually at the expense of the marls that the enlarging and deepening of the new valley is effected; so that all the remaining lava is then left on one side, in the manner represented in the above wood-cut.

Alluviums in ancient fissures.—It might have been expected, from the analogy of modern changes in volcanic countries, that we should find in Auvergne some signs of ancient fissures caused by earthquakes. Accordingly M. Fournet has observed in the course of excavations made for mining in the valley of the Sioule, near Clermont, some curious and decisive proofs of the former existence of open rents which must have communicated with the surface, and have been filled from above with alluvium, after the commencement and before the end of the period of volcanic eruptions. It appears that a metaliferous vein traversing gneiss (in other words, a mass or dike of matter, partly metallic and partly not, filling an old fissure in the gneiss) had been dislocated by later convulsions, so that a new rent was formed in it which reached the surface. Sand and gravel like that of a river bed were then washed in, together with pieces of wood, which are now found fossil with the gravel, in a good state of preservation. The rounded pebbles are partly of granitic rocks, partly of basaltic and augitic lava, showing that the last filling up of the fissure occurred after some lavas had flowed over the adjacent country. But two of the most modern lava streams near Pont Gibaud, have passed over the top of the dike, and they must evidently have been poured out after it was filled with alluvium.*

Age of the more modern lavas.—The only organic remains found as yet in the ancient alluviums appear to belong to the Miocene period; but I have heard of none discovered in the gravel underlying the newest lavas, —those which either occupy the channels of the existing rivers, or are very slightly elevated above them. I think it not improbable that even these may be of Miocene date, although the conjecture will appear extremely rash to some who are aware that the cones and craters whence the lavas issue are often as fresh in their aspect as the majority of the cones of the forest zone of Etna.

The brim of the crater of the Puy de Pariou, near Clermont, is so sharp, and has been so little blunted by time, that it scarcely affords room to stand upon. This and other cones in an equally remarkable state of integrity have stood, I conceive, uninjured, not *in spite* of their loose porous nature, as might at first be naturally supposed, but in consequence

* See Fournet, *Traité de Géog.*, D'Aubuisson, tom. iii. p. 544.

of it. No rills can collect where all the rain is instantly absorbed by the sand and scorix, as was shown to be the case on Etna (see ante, p. 262, 263); and nothing but a water-spout breaking directly upon the Puy de Pariou could carry away a portion of the hill, so long as it is not rent or engulfed by earthquakes.

Attempt to divide volcanos into ante-diluvian and post-diluvian.—The opinions above expressed are entirely at variance with the doctrines of those writers who have endeavoured to arrange all the volcanic cones of Europe under two divisions, those of ante-diluvian and those of post-diluvian origin. To the ante-diluvian class they attribute such hills of sand and scorix as exhibit on their surface evident signs of aqueous denudation; to the post-diluvian, such as betray no marks of having been exposed to such aqueous action. According to this classification, almost all the minor cones of Central France must be called post-diluvian; although, if we receive this term in its ordinary acceptance, as denoting posteriority of date to the Noachian deluge, we are forced to suppose that all the volcanic eruptions occurred within a period of little more than twenty centuries, or between the era of the flood, which happened about four thousand years ago, and the earliest historical records handed down to us respecting the former state of Central France. Dr. Daubeny has justly observed, that had any of these French volcanos been in a state of activity in the age of Julius Cæsar, that general, who encamped upon the plains of Auvergne, and laid siege to its principal city (Gergovia, near Clermont), could hardly have failed to notice them. Had there been even any record of their existence in the time of Pliny or Sidonius Apollinaris, the one would scarcely have omitted to make mention of it in his Natural History, nor the other to introduce some allusion to it among the descriptions of this his native province. This poet's residence was on the borders of the Lake Aidat, which owed its very existence to the damming up of a river by one of the most modern lava-currents.*

The ruins of several Roman bridges, and of the Roman baths, at Royat, confirm the conclusion that no sensible alteration has taken place in the physical geography of the district, not even in the chasms excavated through the newest lavas since ages historically remote. We have no data at present for presuming that any one of the Auvergne cones has been produced within the last four or five thousand years; and the same may be said of those of Velay; and, until the bones of men or articles of human workmanship are found buried under some of their lavas, instead of the remains of extinct animals, which alone have hitherto been met with, we are justified in regarding it as probable that the latest of the volcanic eruptions may have occurred during the Miocene period.

* Daubeny on Volcanos, p. 14.

Supposed effects of the flood.

They who have used the terms ante-diluvian and post-diluvian, in the manner above adverted to, proceed on the assumption that there are clear and unequivocal marks of the passage of a general flood over all parts of the surface of the globe. It had long been a question among the learned, even before the commencement of geological researches, whether the deluge of the Scriptures was universal in reference to the whole surface of the globe, or only so with respect to that portion of it which was then inhabited by man. If the latter interpretation be admissible, it will appear from other parts of this work that there are two classes of phenomena in the configuration of the earth's surface, which might enable us to account for such an event. First, extensive lakes elevated above the level of the ocean; secondly, large tracts of dry land depressed below that level. When there is an immense lake, having its surface, like Lake Superior, raised six hundred feet above the level of the sea, the water may be suddenly let loose by the rending or sinking down of the barrier during earthquakes, and thereby a region as extensive as the valley of the Mississippi, inhabited by a population of several millions, might be deluged.* On the other hand, if there be any country placed beneath the mean level of the ocean, as some have supposed to be the case with part of Asia,† the depressed region must be entirely laid under water, if the tract which separates it from the ocean be fissured or depressed to a certain depth. Humboldt inferred, from the observations of Parrot, that a great cavity existed in Western Asia, eighteen thousand square leagues in area, and occupied by a considerable population.‡ The lowest parts, surrounding the Caspian Sea, were said to be about 350 feet below the level of the Euxine,—here, therefore, the diluvial waters might overflow the summits of hills rising 350 feet above the level of the plain; and if depressions still more profound existed in any former time in Asia, the tops of still loftier mountains may have been covered by a flood.§

* Vol. I. p. 94.

† Ante, pp. 82, 83.

‡ Fragments Asiatiques, Paris, 1831.

§ Since the above passage was first written, Professor Parrot, of Dorpat, has published his "Reise zum Ararat," in which he doubts, nay, appears wholly to have disproved, the fact so long believed on his authority, of a difference of level between the Black Sea and the Caspian. The opinion was originally adopted on the authority of barometrical measurements, made by him and M. Engelhardt in 1811. M. Parrot, however, on revisiting the country in 1829 and 1830, was led to suspect the correctness of his former observations on several grounds, one of which only I shall now quote. Russian engineers had ascertained, by accurate measurements, that the Don, at the place called Katschalinsk, where it is only sixty wersts distant from the Wolga, is 130 Paris feet *higher* than the latter river, and that the Don flows with much greater rapidity to the Black Sea than the Wolga does to the Caspian;

But the great majority of the older commentators have held the deluge, according to the brief account of the event given by Moses, to have consisted of a rise of waters over *the whole earth*, by which the summits of the loftiest mountains on the globe were submerged. Many have indulged in speculations concerning the instruments employed to bring about the grand cataclysm; and there has been a great division of opinion as to the effects which it might be expected to have produced on the surface of the earth. According to one school, of which De Luc formerly, and in our own times Dr. Buckland, have been zealous supporters, the passage of the flood worked a considerable alteration in the external configuration of our continents. By Dr. Buckland the deluge has been represented as a violent and transient rush of waters, which tore up the soil to a great depth, excavated valleys, gave rise to immense beds of shingle, carried fragments of rock and gravel from one point to another; and, during its advance and retreat, strewed the valleys, and even the tops of many hills, with alluvium.*

But I agree with Dr. Fleming, that in the narrative of Moses there are no terms employed that indicate the impetuous rushing of the waters, either as they rose or when they retired, upon the restraining of the rain and the passing of a wind over the earth.† On the contrary, the olive-branch, brought back by the dove, seems as clear an indication to us that the vegetation was not destroyed, as it was then to Noah that the dry land was about to reappear.

I have been led with great reluctance into this digression, in the hope of relieving the minds of some readers from groundless apprehension respecting the bearing of many of the views advocated in this work.

consequently, if there be a difference of level of the two seas, it must be considerably less than 130 feet. Parrot accordingly, having determined to ascertain the true state of the case, made a series of levellings from the mouth of the Wolga to Zaryt-zin, 400 wersts up its course, and from the mouth of the Don to the like distance. As the result of these observations, he made the mouth of the Don to be between three and four feet *lower* than that of the Wolga! Baron Humboldt, who with other geographers had given full credit to the former statement of Parrot, refused to admit the validity of these new results, unless the professor was prepared to show that his former observations were less worthy of confidence. In reply to this, Parrot, in an Appendix, admits that their barometrical instruments used in 1811 were imperfect, that errors had crept into his calculations, that he was suffering from ill health, &c.

Notwithstanding this recantation, M. Erman, of Berlin, in his "Reise um die erde," &c., 1828-29-30, infers from independent observations that the Caspian is lower than the Black Sea by 42.8 toises, or about 280 feet; and Meyer and Lenz, in a paper read to the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg in 1835, mention that Mr. Goebel, by his barometrical measurements in 1833, found a difference of 50 feet.

* Buckland, *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*. These opinions, however, have been candidly renounced in a note in his *Bridgewater Treatise*.

† Rev. Dr. Fleming, on the *Geological Deluge*, Edin. Phil. Journ., vol. xiv. p. 205; and remarks by myself in the *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1827, No. lxxii. p. 481.

They have been in the habit of regarding the diluvial theory above controverted as alone capable of affording an explanation of geological phenomena in accordance with Scripture, and they may have felt disapprobation at an attempt to prove, in a former chapter, that the minor volcanos on the flanks of Etna may, some of them, be more than 10,000 years old.* How, they would immediately ask, could they have escaped the denuding force of a diluvial rush of waters? The same objection may have presented itself when I quoted, with respect, the opinion of a distinguished botanist, that some living specimens of the Baobab tree of Africa, or the *Taxodium* of Mexico, may be 5000 years old.† The reader may also have been astonished at the high antiquity assigned to the greater part of the European alluviums, and the many different ages to which I have referred them,‡ as he may have been taught to consider the whole as the result of one *recent* and *simultaneous* inundation.

Professor Sedgwick is inclined to adopt the hypothesis of M. Elie de Beaumont, that the sudden elevation of mountain-chains “has been followed again and again by mighty waves desolating whole regions of the earth;”§ a phenomenon which he thinks has “taken away all anterior incredibility from the fact of a recent deluge.”||

But I cannot admit that there are sufficient geological data for inferring such instantaneous upheavings of submerged land as might be capable of causing a flood over a whole continent at once. I may also observe, that the reasoning above alluded to seems to proceed entirely on the assumption that the flood of Noah was brought about by *natural* causes, just as some writers have contended that a volcanic eruption was the instrument employed to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. If we believe the flood to have been a temporary suspension of the ordinary laws of the natural world, requiring a miraculous intervention of Divine power, then it is evident that the credibility of such an event cannot be enhanced by any series of inundations, however analogous, of which the geologist may imagine that he has discovered the proofs.

For my own part, I have always considered the flood, when its universality in the strictest sense of the term is insisted upon, as a preternatural event far beyond the reach of philosophical inquiry, whether as to the causes employed to produce it, or the effects most likely to result from it. At the same time, it is clear that they who are desirous of pointing out the coincidence of geological phenomena with the occurrence of such a general catastrophe, must neglect no one of the circumstances enumerated in the Mosaic history, least of all so remarkable a fact as that the olive remained standing while the waters were abating.

* Ante, p. 262.

† Ante, p. 261.

‡ Ante, p. 298.

§ Ante, p. 262, 263.

|| Sedgwick, Anniv. Address to the Geol. Soc., Feb. 18th, 1831.

Recapitulation.—I shall now briefly recapitulate some of the principal conclusions to which we have been led by an examination of the volcanic districts of Central France.

1st. Some of the volcanic eruptions of Auvergne took place during the Eocene period; others at an era long subsequent, probably during the Miocene period.

2dly. There are no proofs as yet discovered that the most recent of the volcanos of Auvergne and Velay are subsequent to the Miocene period, the integrity of many cones and craters not opposing any sound objection to the opinion that they may be of very great antiquity.

3dly. There are alluviums in Auvergne of very different ages, some of them belonging to the Miocene period. Many of these have been covered by lava-currents which have been poured out in succession while the excavation of valleys was in progress.

4thly. There are a multitude of cones in Auvergne, Velay, and the Vivarais, which have never been subjected to the action of a violent rush of waters capable of modifying considerably the surface of the earth.

5thly. If, therefore, the Mosaic deluge be represented as universal, and as having exercised a violent denuding force, all these cones, several hundred in number, must be post-diluvian.

6thly. But since the beginning of the historical era, or the invasion of Gaul by Julius Cæsar, the volcanic action in Auvergne has been dormant; and there is nothing to countenance the idea that, between the date usually assigned to the Mosaic deluge and the earliest traditional and historical records of Central France (a period of little more than twenty centuries), all or any one of the more entire cones of loose scorix were thrown up.

Lastly. It is the opinion of some writers, that the earth's surface underwent no great modification at the era of the Mosaic deluge, and that the strictest interpretation of the Scriptural narrative does not warrant us in expecting to find any geological monuments of the catastrophe; an opinion which would be consistent with the preservation of these volcanic cones, however high their antiquity.

CHAPTER XX.

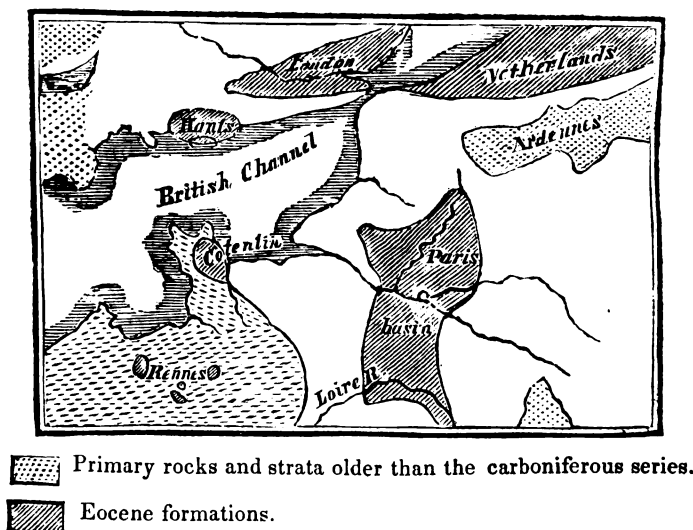
EOCENE FORMATIONS—*continued.*

Basin of the Cotentin, or Valognes—Rennes—Basin of the Netherlands—Aix, in Provence—Fossil insects—Vicentine—Tertiary strata of England—Basins of London and Hampshire—Different groups—Plastic clay and sand—London clay (p. 399.)—Bagshot sand—Freshwater strata of the Isle of Wight—Palæotherium and other fossils of Binstead—English Eocene strata conformable to chalk—Outliers on the elevated parts of the chalk (p. 402).

IN addition to the Eocene formations treated of in the last three chapters, there are others in the north of Europe, the geographical position of which is delineated on the annexed Map.*

MAP OF THE PRINCIPAL TERTIARY BASINS OF THE EOCENE PERIOD.

Fig. 156.



N. B. The space left blank is occupied by secondary formations from the old red sandstone to the chalk inclusive.

Basin of the Cotentin, or Valognes.—The strata in the environs of Valognes, in the department of La Manche, consist chiefly of a coarse limestone resembling the calcaire grossier of Paris, of which M. Des-

* This Map is copied from one given by M. Desnoyers, *Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris*, 1825, pl. 9; compiled partly from that author's observations, and partly from Mr. Webster's Map, *Geol. Trans.*, First Series, vol. ii., plate 10.

noyers has given an elaborate description. It is occasionally covered with a compact freshwater limestone, alternating with freshwater marls. In these Eocene strata more than 300 species of fossil shells have been discovered, almost all identical with species of the Paris basin. Superimposed upon the Eocene strata of this basin is a newer marine deposit, extending over a limited area, the fossils of which agree with those of the faluns of the Loire.* Here, therefore, the geologist has an opportunity of observing the superposition of the Miocene deposits upon those of the age of the Paris basin.

Rennes.—Several small patches, also, of marine strata, have been found by M. Desnoyers, in the neighbourhood of Rennes, which are characterized by Eocene fossils, and repose on ancient rocks, as will be seen in the Map.

Basin of Belgium, or the Netherlands.—The greater part of the tertiary formations of the Low Countries consist of clay and sand, much resembling those of the basin of London, afterwards to be described; and the fossil shells are of the same species.

Aix in Provence.—The tertiary strata of Aix and Fuveau, in Provence, are of great thickness and extent, the lower members being remarkable for containing coal grit and beds of compact limestone, such as in England are found only in ancient secondary groups. Yet these strata are for the most part of freshwater origin, and contain several species of Eocene shells, together with many which are peculiar to this basin. It will require a fuller comparison than has yet been made of the fossil remains of Aix and Fuveau, before we can determine with accuracy the relative age of this formation. Some of the plants seem to agree with those of the Paris basin, while many of the insects have been supposed identical with species now living.† These insects have been almost exclusively procured from a thin bed of gray calcareous marl, which passes into an argillaceous limestone found in the quarries of gypsum near Aix. The rock in which they are imbedded is so thinly laminated, that there are sometimes more than seventy layers in the thickness of an inch. The insects are for the most part in an extraordinary state of preservation, and an impression of their form is seen both on the upper and under laminæ, as in the case of the Monte Bolca fishes. M. Marcel de Serres enumerates sixty-two genera, belonging chiefly to the orders Diptera, Hemiptera, and Coleoptera. On reviewing a collection brought from Aix, Mr. Curtis observes that they are all of European forms, and most of them referable to existing genera.‡ With the single exception of an *Hydrobius*, none of the species are aquatic. The antennæ, tarsi, and trophi are generally very obscure, or distorted; yet in a few the claws are visible, and the

* Desnoyers, Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris, 1825.

† M. Marcel de Serres, Géog. des Ter. Tertiaires du Midi de la France.

‡ Murchison and Lyell. Ed. New Phil. Journ., Oct. 1829.

sculpture, and even some degree of local colouring, are preserved. The nerves of the wings, in almost all the Diptera, are perfectly distinct, and even the pubescence on the head of one of them. Several of the beetles have the wings extended beyond the elytra, as if they had made an effort to escape by flying, or had fallen into the water while on the wing.*

Vicentine.—On the southern flank of the Alps to the North of Vicenza, in Italy, a limestone occurs containing shells of Eocene species, and in the basaltic tuffs associated with this limestone (as at Ronca and other places) shells are found which are also identical with species of the Paris basin.†

Basins of London and Hampshire.

The reader will see in the small Map before given (Fig. 156., ante, p. 396), the position of the two districts usually called the basins of London and Hampshire, to which the Eocene formations of England are confined. These tracts are bounded by rising grounds composed of chalk, except where the sea intervenes. That the chalk passes beneath the tertiary strata, we can not only infer from geological data, but can prove by numerous artificial sections at points where wells have been sunk, or borings made through the overlying beds. The Eocene deposits are chiefly marine, and have generally been divided into three groups: 1st, the Plastic clay and sand, which is the lowest group; 2dly, the London clay; and, 3dly, the Bagshot sand. Of all these the mineral composition is very simple, for they consist almost entirely of clay, sand, and shingle, the great mass of clay being in the middle, and the upper and lower members of the series being more arenaceous.

Plastic clay and sand.—The lowest formation, which sometimes attains a thickness of from four hundred to five hundred feet, consists principally of an indefinite number of beds of sand, shingle, clay, and loam, irregularly alternating, some of the clay being used in potteries, in reference to which the name of Plastic clay has been given to the whole formation. The beds of shingle are composed of perfectly rolled chalk flints, with here and there small pebbles of quartz. Heaps of these materials appear sometimes to have remained for a long time covered by a tranquil sea. Dr. Buckland mentions that he observed a large pebble in part of this formation at Bromley, to which five full-grown oyster-shells were affixed, in such a manner as to show that they had commenced their first growth upon it, and remained attached through life.‡

* Curtis, Ed. New Phil. Journ., Oct. 1829, where figures of some of the insects are given.

† See list of species collected by M. Boué, and named by M. Deshayes, Bull. de la Soc. Géol. de France, tome iii. p. 91.

‡ Geol. Trans., First Series, vol. iv. p. 300.

In some of the associated clays and sand, perfect marine shells are met with, which are of the same species as those of the London clay. The line of separation, indeed, between this superincumbent blue clay and the Plastic clay and sand is quite arbitrary, as any geologist may be convinced who examines the celebrated section in Alum Bay, in the Isle of Wight, where a distinct alternation of the two groups is observable, each marked with their most characteristic peculiarities.* In the midst of the sands of the lower series a mass of clay occurs two hundred feet thick, containing septaria, and replete with the usual fossils of the neighbourhood of London.†

The *arenaceous* beds are chiefly laid open on the confines of the basins of London and Hampshire, in following which we discover at many places great beds of perfectly rounded flints. Of this description, on the southern borders of the basin of London, are the hills of Comb Hurst and the Addington hills, which form a ridge stretching from Blackheath to Croydon. Here they have much the appearance of banks of sand and shingle formed near the shores of a tertiary sea; but whether they were really of littoral origin cannot be determined, for want of a sufficient number of sections, which might enable us to compare the tertiary strata at the edges with those in the central parts of each basin.

We have ample opportunities in the basin of Paris of examining steep cliffs of hard rock, which bound many of the valleys, and innumerable excavations have been made for building-stone, limestone, and gypsum; but when we attempt to obtain a connected view of any considerable part of the tertiary series in the basin of London, we are almost entirely limited to a single line of coast-section; for in the interior the regular beds are much concealed by an alluvial covering of flint gravel spread alike over the summits and gentle slopes of the hills, and over the bottoms of the valleys.

Organic remains are extremely scarce in the Plastic clay; but when any shells occur, they are of Eocene species. Vegetable impressions and fossil wood are sometimes met with, and even beds of lignite; but none of the *species* of plants have, I believe, as yet been ascertained.

London clay.—This formation consists of a blueish or blackish clay, sometimes passing into a calcareous marl, rarely into a solid rock. Its thickness is very great, sometimes exceeding five hundred feet.‡ It contains many layers of ovate or flattish masses of argillaceous limestone, which, in their interior, are generally traversed in various directions by cracks, partially or wholly filled by calcareous spar. These masses,

* See Mr. Webster's Memoir, Geol. Trans., vol. ii., First Series, and his Letters in Sir H. Englefield's Isle of Wight.

† See Mr. Webster's Sections, plate 11. Geol. Trans., vol. ii., First Series.

‡ Con. and Phil. Outlines of Geol., p. 33.

called septaria, are sometimes continued through a thickness of two hundred feet.*

A great number of the marine shells of this clay have been identified with those of the Paris basin; and it is quite evident that the strata of these two basins belong to the same epoch.

No remains of terrestrial mammalia have as yet been found in this clay; but the occurrence of bones and skeletons of crocodiles and turtles prove, as Mr. Conybeare justly remarks, the existence of neighbouring dry land. The shores, at least, of some islands were accessible, whither these creatures may have resorted to lay their eggs. In like manner, we may infer the contiguity of land from the immense number of ligneous seed-vessels of plants, some of them resembling the cocoa-nut, and other spices of tropical regions, which have been found fossil in great profusion in the Isle of Sheppey. Such is the abundance of these fruits, that they have been supposed to belong to several hundred distinct species of plants.

Bagshot sand.—The third and uppermost group, usually termed the Bagshot sand, rests conformably upon the London clay, and consists of siliceous sand and sandstone, devoid of organic remains, with some thin deposits of marl associated. From these *marls* a few marine shells have been obtained which are in an imperfect state, but appear to belong to Eocene species common to the Paris basin.†

Freshwater strata of the Hampshire basin.—In the northern part of the Isle of Wight, and part of the opposite coast of Hampshire, freshwater strata occur resting on the London clay. They are composed chiefly of calcareous and argillaceous marls, interstratified with some thick beds of siliceous sand, and a few layers of limestone sometimes slightly siliceous. The marls are often green, and bear a considerable resemblance to the green marls of Auvergne and the Paris basin. The shells and gyrogonites also agree specifically with some of those most common in the French deposits. Mr. Webster, who first described the freshwater formation of Hampshire, divided it into an upper and lower series, separated by intervening beds of marine origin. There are undoubtedly certain intercalated strata, both in the Isle of Wight and coast of Hampshire, marked by a slight intermixture of marine and freshwater shells, sufficient to imply a temporary return of the sea, before and after which the waters of the lake, or rather, perhaps, some large river, prevailed.‡ The united thickness of the freshwater and intercalated upper marine beds, exposed in a vertical precipice in Headen Hill, in the Isle of Wight, is about four hundred feet, the marine series appearing about half way up in the cliff.

* Outlines of Geol., p. 27.

† Warburton, Geol. Trans., vol. i., Second Series.

‡ See Memoirs of Mr. Webster, Geol. Trans., vol. ii., First Series; vol. i. part. i., Second Series; and Englefield's Isle of Wight.—Professor Sedgwick, Ann. of Phil., 1822; and Lyell, Geol. Trans., vol. ii., Second Series.

Eocene mammiferous remains.—Very perfect remains of tortoises and the teeth of crocodiles have been procured from the freshwater strata; but a still more interesting discovery has recently been made. The bones of mammalia, corresponding to those of the celebrated gypsum of Paris, have been disinterred at Binstead, near Ryde, in the Isle of Wight. In the ancient quarries near this town a limestone, belonging to the lower freshwater formation, is worked for building. Solid beds alternate with marls, wherein a tooth of an Anoplotherium, and two teeth of the genus Palæotherium, were found. These remains were accompanied not only by several other fragments of the bones of Pachydermata (chiefly in a rolled and injured state), but also by the jaw of a new species of Ruminantia, apparently closely allied to the genus Moschus.* Mr. T. Allan of Edinburgh had several years before found the tooth of an Anoplotherium at the same spot.

These newer strata of the Isle of Wight bear a certain degree of resemblance to some of the green marls and limestones in the Paris basin; yet, as a whole, no formations can be more dissimilar in mineral character than the Eocene deposits of England and Paris. In our own island the tertiary strata are more exclusively marine; and it might be said that the Parisian series differs chiefly from that of London in the very points in which it agrees with the formations of Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay. The tertiary formations of England are, in fact, almost exclusively of mechanical origin, and their composition bespeaks the absence of those mineral and thermal waters to which I have attributed the origin of the compact and siliceous limestones, the gypsum, and beds of pure flint, common to the Paris basin and Central France.

English tertiary strata conformable to the chalk.—The British Eocene strata are nearly conformable to the chalk on which they rest, being horizontal where the strata of the chalk are horizontal, and vertical where they are vertical. On the other hand, there are evident signs that the surface of the chalk had, in many places, been furrowed by the action of the waves and currents, before the Plastic clay and its sands were superimposed. In the quarries near Rochester and Gravesend, for instance, fine examples are seen of deep indentations on the surface of the chalk, into which sand, together with rolled and angular pieces of chalk-flint, have been swept.† But these appearances may be referred to the action of water when the chalk began to emerge during the Eocene period, and they by no means warrant the conclusion that the chalk had undergone any considerable change of position before the tertiary strata were superimposed.

In this respect there is a marked difference between the reciprocal rela-

* Pratt, Trans. of Geol. Soc., vol. iii. part iii. p. 451.

† Con. and Phil., Outlines of Geol., p. 62.

tions of our secondary and tertiary rocks, and those which exist between the same groups throughout the greater part of the Continent, especially in the neighbourhood of mountain-chains. Near the base, for example, of the Alps, Apennines, and Pyrenees, we find the newer formations reposing unconformably upon the truncated edges of the older beds; and it is clear that, in many cases, the older strata had been subjected to a complicated series of movements before the more modern set was formed. The newer beds rise only to a certain height on the flanks of the mountains which usually tower above them, and are recognised at once by the geologist as having been already converted into land when the tertiary deposits were still forming in the sea. The ancient borders, also, of that sea can often be defined with certainty, and the outline of some of its bays and sea-cliffs traced.

In England, although undoubtedly the greater portion of the tertiary strata is confined to certain spaces, we find outlying patches here and there at great distances beyond the general limits, and at great heights upon the chalk which separates the basins of London and Hampshire.* I have seen masses of clay extending in this manner to near the edge of the western escarpment of the chalk of Wiltshire, and Mr. Mantell has pointed out the same to me in the South Downs. Near the escarpment at Lewes, for example, there is a fissure in the chalk filled with sand, and with a ferruginous breccia, such as usually marks the lower members of the Plastic clay formation. From the occurrence of these tertiary outliers Dr. Buckland inferred, "that the basins of London and Hants were originally united together in one continuous deposit across the now intervening chalk of Salisbury Plain in Wilts, and the plains of Andover and Basingstoke in Hants; and that the greater integrity in which the tertiary strata are preserved within the basins has resulted from the protection which their comparatively low position has afforded them from the ravages of diluvian denudation."†

I agree so far with this conclusion as to believe that the basins of London and Hampshire were not separated until part of the tertiary strata were deposited; but I do not think it probable that the tertiary beds ever extended continuously over those spaces where the outliers above mentioned occur, nor that the comparative thinness of those deposits in the higher chalk countries should be attributed chiefly to the greater degree of denudation which they have there suffered.

* Dr. Buckland, *Geol. Trans.*, Second series, vol. ii. p. 125.

† *Ibid.* p. 126.

CHAPTER XXI.

ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH EOCENE FORMATIONS AND DENUDATION OF THE WEALD.

Manner in which the English tertiary strata may have originated—Denudation of secondary strata during their deposition—Valley of the Weald—Secondary rocks of the Weald divisible into five groups—North and South Downs—Section across the valley of the Weald—Anticlinal axis—Chalk escarpments once sea-cliffs (p. 408.)—Rise and denudation of the strata gradual—Parallel ridges and valleys formed by harder and softer beds—No ruins of the chalk on the central district of the Weald (p. 411.)—Double system of valleys, the longitudinal and the transverse (p. 414).

Preliminary views.—IN explanation of the phenomena described in the last chapter, I shall now endeavour to lay before the reader a view of the series of events which may have produced the leading geological and geographical features of the south-east of England. I conceive that the chalk, together with many subjacent rocks, may have remained undisturbed and in horizontal stratification until after the commencement of the Eocene period. When at length the chalk was upheaved and exposed to the action of the waves and currents, it was rent and shattered, so that the subjacent secondary strata were soon after exposed to denudation. The waste of all these rocks, composed chiefly of sandstone and clay, supplied materials for the tertiary sands and clays; while the chalk was the source of flinty shingle, and of the calcareous matter which we find intermixed with the Eocene clays. The tracts now separating the basins of London and Hampshire were those first elevated, and which contributed by their gradual decay to the production of the newer strata. These last were accumulated in deep submarine hollows formed probably by the subsidence of certain parts of the chalk, which sank while the adjoining tracts were rising.

Denudation of the Valley of the Weald.—In order to understand this theory, it will be necessary that the reader should be acquainted with the phenomena of denudation exhibited by the chalk and some of the older secondary rocks in parts of England, most nearly contiguous to the basins of London and Hampshire. It will be sufficient to consider one of the denuded districts, as the appearances observable in others are strictly analogous; I shall, therefore, direct attention to what may be called *the Valley of the Weald*, or the region intervening between the North and South Downs.

Map.—The district alluded to is delineated in the coloured Map, given in Plate XV., which has been chiefly taken from Mr. Greenough's Map

of England; and it will be there seen that the southern portion of the basin of London, and the north-eastern limits of that of Hampshire, are separated by a tract of secondary rocks, between forty and fifty miles in breadth, comprising within it the whole of Sussex, and parts of the counties of Kent, Surrey, and Hampshire.

There can be no doubt that the tertiary deposits of the Hampshire basin formerly extended much farther along our southern coast towards Beachy Head, for patches are still found near Newhaven, and at other points, as will be seen by the Map. These are now wasting away, and will in time disappear, as the sea is constantly encroaching and undermining the subjacent chalk.

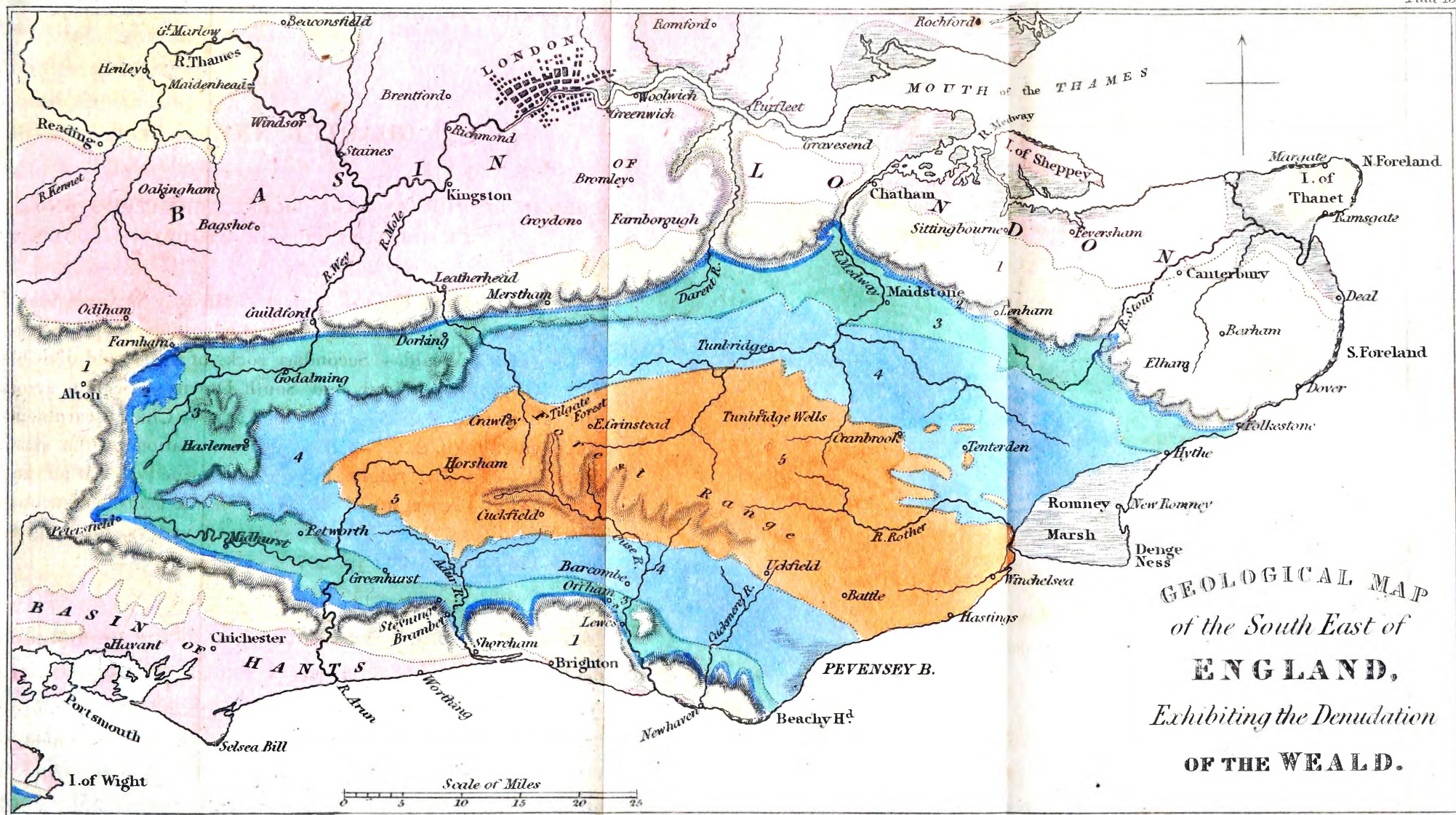
The secondary rocks, depicted on the Map, (Plate XV,) may be divided into five groups:—

1. *Chalk and upper green-sand*.—This group is the uppermost of the series; it includes the white chalk with and without flints, and an inferior deposit, called, provincially, “Firestone,” and by English geologists, the “Upper green-sand.” It sometimes consists of loose siliceous sand, containing grains of silicate of iron, but often of firm beds of sandstone and chert.
2. Blue Clay or calcareous marl, called, provincially, *Gault*.
3. *Lower green sand*, a very complex group, consisting of gray, yellowish, and greenish sands; ferruginous sand and sandstone; clay chert, and siliceous limestone.
4. *Weald clay*, composed for the most part of clay without intermixture of calcareous matter, but sometimes including thin beds of sand and shelly limestone.
5. *Hastings sands*, composed chiefly of sand, sand-stone, clay, and calcareous grit, passing into limestone.*

The first three formations above enumerated are of marine origin; the last two, Nos. 4 and 5, contain almost exclusively the remains of fresh-water and amphibious animals. But it is not my intention to enlarge, at present, upon the organic remains of these formations, as the rocks are merely adverted to in order that I may describe the changes of position which they have undergone, and the denudation to which they have been exposed since the commencement of the Eocene period,—mutations which, if the theory about to be explained be well founded, belong strictly to the history of *tertiary* phenomena.

By a glance at the Map, the reader may trace at once the superficial area occupied by each of the five formations above mentioned. On the west will be seen a large expanse of chalk, from which two branches are

* For an account of these strata in the south-east of England, see Mantell's *Geology of Sussex*, and Dr. Fitton's *Geology of Hastings*, where the memoirs of all the writers on this part of England are referred to.



GEOLOGICAL MAP
of the South East of
ENGLAND,
Exhibiting the Denudation
OF THE WEALD.



sent off; one through the hills of Surrey and Kent to Dover, forming the ridge called the North Downs; and the other through Sussex to the sea at Beachy Head, constituting the South Downs. The space comprised between the North and South Downs, or, "the Valley of the Weald," consists of the formations Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, of the above table. It will be observed that the chalk terminates abruptly, and with a well-defined line towards the country occupied by those older strata. Within that line is a narrow band, coloured blue, formed by the gault; and within this again, is the Lower green-sand, next the Weald clay; and then, in the centre of the district, a ridge formed by the Hastings sands.

Section of the Valley of the Weald.—It has been ascertained by careful investigation, that if a line be drawn from any part of the North to the South Downs, which shall pass through the central group (No. 5), the beds will be found arranged in the order described in the annexed section (Fig. 157., p. 406).

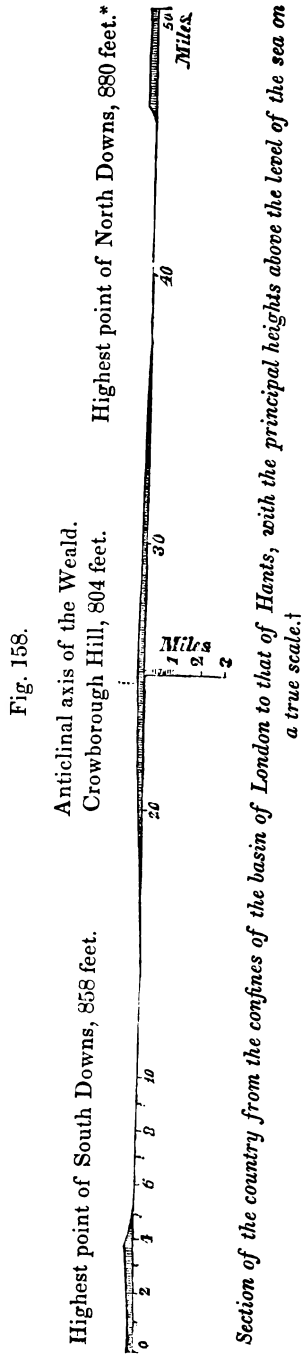
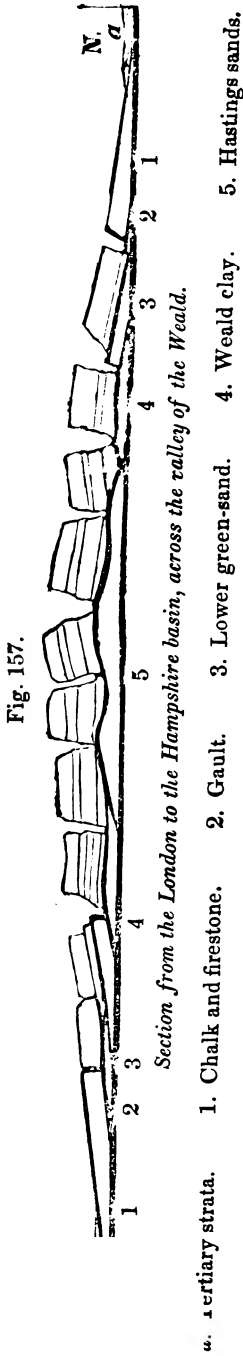
The reader is referred at present to the dark lines of the section, as the fainter lines represent portions of rock supposed to have been carried away by denudation.

At each end of the diagram the tertiary strata, *a*, are exhibited reposing on the chalk. In the centre are seen the Hastings sands (No. 5), forming an anticlinal axis, on each side of which the other formations are arranged with an opposite dip. It has been necessary, however, in order to give a clear view of the different formations, to exaggerate the proportional height of each in comparison to its horizontal extent; and a true scale is therefore subjoined in another diagram (Fig. 153., p. 406), in order to correct the erroneous impression which might otherwise be made on the reader's mind. In this section the distance between the North and South Downs is represented to exceed forty miles; for the Valley of the Weald is here intersected in its longest diameter, in the direction of a line between Lewes and Maidstone.

In attempting to account for the manner in which the five secondary groups above mentioned may have been brought into their present position, the following hypothesis has been very generally adopted:—Suppose the five formations to lie in horizontal stratification at the bottom of the sea; then let a movement from below press them upwards into the form of a flattened dome, and let the crown of this dome be afterwards cut off, so that the incision should penetrate to the lowest of the five groups. The different beds would then be exposed on the surface, in the manner exhibited in the accompanying Map, Pl. XV.*

It will appear, from former parts of this work, that the amount of elevation here supposed to have taken place is not greater than we can prove to have occurred in other regions within geological periods of no great duration. On the other hand, the quantity of denudation or removal by

* See illustrations of this theory by Dr. Fitton, Geol. Sketch of Hastings.



* Lieutenant H. Murphy, R. E., informs me that Botley Hill, near Godstone, in Surrey, was found by trigonometrical measurement to be 880 feet above the level of the sea; and Wrotham Hill, near Maidstone, which appears to be next in height of the North Downs, 795 feet.

† My friend Mr. Mantell, of Lewes, has kindly drawn up this scale at my request.

water of vast masses which are assumed to have once reached continuously from the North to the South Downs is so enormous, that the reader may at first be startled by the boldness of the hypothesis. But he will find the difficulty to vanish when once sufficient time is allowed for the gradual and successive rise of the strata, during which the waves and currents of the ocean might slowly accomplish an operation, which no sudden diluvial rush of waters could possibly have effected.

Fig. 159.



View of the chalk escarpment of the South Downs. Taken from the Devil's Dike, looking towards the west and south-west.

a. The town of Steyning is hidden by this point.

b. Edburton church.

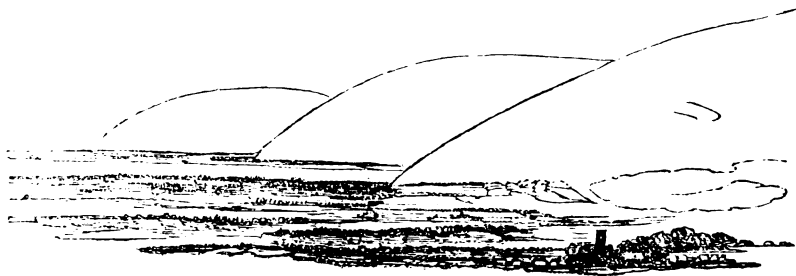
c. Road.

d. River Adur.

Escarpments of the chalk once sea-cliffs.—In order to make the reader acquainted with the physical structure of the Valley of the Weald, I shall suppose him first to travel southwards from the London basin. On leaving the tertiary strata he will first ascend a gently inclined plane, composed of the upper flinty portion of the chalk, and then find himself on the summit of a declivity consisting, for the most part, of different members of the chalk formation; below which the upper green-sand, and sometimes also the gault, *crop out*.* This steep declivity is called by geologists “the escarpment of the chalk,” which overhangs a valley excavated chiefly out of the argillaceous or marly bed, termed Gault (No. 2). The escarpment is continuous along the southern termination of the North Downs, and may be traced from the sea at Folkstone, westward to Guilford and the neighbourhood of Petersfield, and from thence to the termination of the South Downs at Beachy Head. In this precipice or steep slope the strata are cut off abruptly, and it is evident that they must originally have extended farther. In the accompanying wood-cut, (Fig. 159., ante, p. 407), part of the escarpment of the South Downs is faithfully represented, where the denudation at the base of the declivity has been somewhat more extensive than usual, in consequence of the upper and lower green-sand being formed of very incoherent materials, the upper, indeed, being extremely thin and almost wanting.

The geologist cannot fail to recognise in this view the exact likeness of a sea-cliff; and if he turns and looks in an opposite direction, or eastward towards Beachy Head (see Fig. 160.), he will see the same line

Fig. 160.



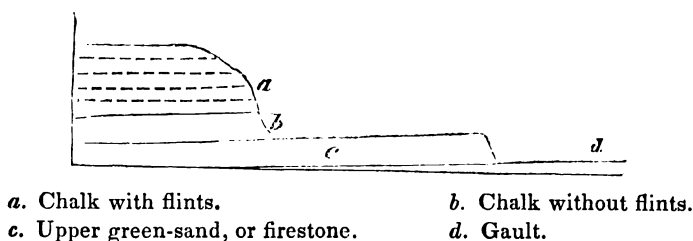
Chalk escarpment as seen from the hill above Steyning, Sussex. The castle and village of Bramber in the foreground.

of height prolonged. Even those who are not accustomed to speculate on the former changes which the surface has undergone, may fancy the broad and level plain to resemble the flat sands which were laid dry by the receding tide, and the different projecting masses of chalk to be the headlands of a coast which separated the different bays from each other.

* This term, borrowed from our miners, is used to express the coming up to the surface of one stratum from beneath another.

Lower terrace of firestone.—I have said that the upper green-sand ("firestone," or "malm-rock," as it is sometimes called) is almost absent in the tract here alluded to. It is, in fact, seen at Beachy Head to thin out to an inconsiderable stratum of loose green-sand; but farther to the westward it is of great thickness, and contains hard beds of blue chert and limestone. Here, accordingly, we find that it produces a corresponding influence on the scenery of the country; for it runs out like a step beyond the foot of the chalk-hills, and constitutes a lower terrace, varying in breadth from a quarter of a mile to three miles, and following the sinuosities of the chalk escarpment.*

Fig. 161.



a. Chalk with flints.

b. Chalk without flints.

c. Upper green-sand, or firestone.

d. Gault.

It is impossible to desire a more satisfactory proof that the escarpment is due to the excavating power of water during the rise of the strata; for I have shown, in my account of the coast of Sicily, in what manner the encroachments of the sea tend to efface that succession of terraces which must otherwise result from the successive rises of a coast preyed upon by the waves.† During the interval between two elevatory movements, the tower terrace will usually be destroyed, wherever it is composed of incoherent materials; whereas the sea will not have time entirely to sweep away another part of the same terrace, or lower platform, which happens to be composed of rocks of a harder texture, and capable of offering a firmer resistance to the erosive action of water.

Valleys where softer strata, ridges where harder crop out.—It is evident that the gault No. 2 (see the Map, Pl. XV.) could not have opposed any effectual resistance to the denuding force of the waves; its outcrop, therefore, is marked by a valley, the breadth of which is often increased by the loose incoherent nature of the uppermost beds of the lower green-sand, which lie next to it, and which have often been removed with equal facility.

This formation (the lower green-sand) has been sometimes entirely smoothed off like the gault; but in those districts where chert, limestone,

* Mr. Murchison, Geol. Sketch of Sussex, &c., Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. ii. p. 98.

† See ante, pp. 267, 268, and wood-cut, Fig. 107.

and other solid materials enter largely into its composition, it forms a range of hills parallel to the chalk, which sometimes rival the escarpment of the chalk itself in height, or even surpass it, as in Leith Hill. This ridge often presents a steep escarpment towards the Weald clay which crops out from under it. (See the strong lines in Fig. 157., p. 406.)

The clay last mentioned forms, for the most part, a broad valley, separating the lower green-sand from the Hastings sands, or Forest ridge; but where subordinate beds of sandstone of a firmer texture occur, the uniformity of the plain is broken by waving irregularities and hillocks.*

In the central region, or Forest ridge, the strata have been considerably disturbed, and are greatly fractured and shifted. One fault is known where the vertical shift of a bed of calcareous grit is no less than sixty fathoms.† It must not be supposed that the anticlinal axis, which is described as running through the centre of the Weald, is by any means so simple as is usually represented in geological sections. There are, on the contrary, a series of anticlinal and synclinal‡ lines, which form ridges and troughs running nearly parallel to each other.

Much of the picturesque character of the scenery of this district arises from the depth of the narrow valleys and ridges to which the sharp bends and fractures of the strata have given rise; but it is also in part to be attributed to the excavating power exerted by water, especially on the interstratified argillaceous beds.

From the above description it will appear that, in the tract intervening between the North and South Downs, there are a series of parallel valleys and ridges; the valleys appearing evidently to have been formed principally by the removal of softer materials, while the ridges are due to the resistance offered by firmer beds to the destroying action of water.

Rise and denudation of the strata gradual.—Let us then consider how far these phenomena agree with the changes which we should naturally expect to occur during the rise of the secondary strata. Suppose the line of the most violent movements to have coincided with what is now the central ridge of the Weald valley; in that case the first land which emerged must have been situated where the Forest ridge is now placed. Here a number of reefs may have existed, and islands of chalk, which may have been gradually devoured by the ocean in the same manner as Heligoland and other European islands have disappeared in modern times, as related in the second book.§

Suppose the ridge or dome first elevated to have been so rent and shattered on its summit as to give more easy access to the waves, until at

* Martin, Geol. of Western Sussex. Fitton, Geol. of Hastings, p. 31.

† Fitton, *ibid.* p. 55.

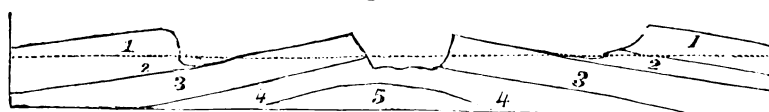
‡ For explanation of these terms, see Glossary, at the end of Vol. I.

§ Vol. I. p. 272.

Fig. 162.



Fig. 163.



The dotted lines represent the sea-level.

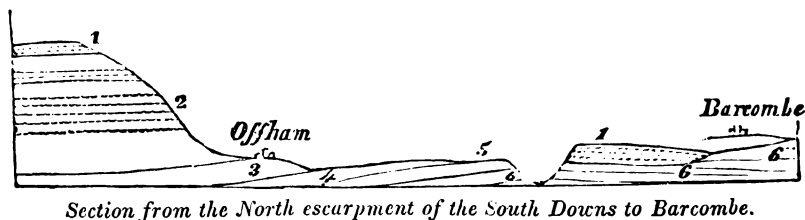
length the masses represented by the fainter lines (Fig. 162.) were removed. Two strips of land might then remain on each side of a channel, in the same manner as the opposite coasts of France and England, composed of chalk, present ranges of white cliffs facing each other. A powerful current might then rush, like that which now ebbs and flows through the Straits of Dover, and might scoop out a channel in the gault. We must bear in mind that the intermittent action of earthquakes would accompany this denuding process, fissuring rocks, throwing down cliffs, and bringing up, from time to time, new stratified masses, and thus greatly accelerating the rate of waste. If the lower bed of chalk on one side of the channel should be harder than on the other, it would cause an under terrace, as represented in the diagram (Fig. 162.), resembling that presented by the upper green-sand in parts of Sussex and Hampshire. When at length the gault was entirely swept away from the central parts of the channel, the lower green-sand (3. Fig. 163.) would be laid bare, and portions of it would become land during the continuance of the upheaving earthquakes. Meanwhile the chalk cliffs would recede farther from one another, whereby four parallel strips of land, or perhaps rows of islands, would be caused.

By a continuance of these operations the edges of the argillaceous strata, No. 2 (Fig. 163.), would be exposed to farther erosion by the waves; and a portion of the clay, No. 4, would be also removed, and as it gradually rose, would be swept off from part of the subjacent group, No. 5. This last would then in its turn be laid bare, and afterwards become land by subsequent elevation.

Why no ruins of chalk on central district.—By this theory of the successive emergence and denudation of the groups, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, we may account for an alluvial phenomenon which seems inexplicable on any other hypothesis. The summits of the chalk downs are covered everywhere with flint gravel, which is often entirely wanting on the surface of the clay at the foot of the chalk escarpment, and no traces of chalk flint have ever been found in the alluvium of the central district, or Forest

ridge. It is rare, indeed, to see any wreck of the chalk, even at the distance of two or three miles from the escarpments of the North and South Downs, a fact attested by those road-surveyors who have diligently sought for such materials. To this general rule, however, an exception occurs near Barcombe, about three miles to the north of Lewes, a place which I visited with Mr. Mantell, to whom I am indebted for the accompanying section (Fig. 164.). It will be seen that the valley

Fig. 164.



1. Gravel composed of partially rounded chalk flints.
2. Chalk with and without flints.
3. Lowest chalk or chalk marl (upper green-sand wanting).
- 4 Gault. 5. Lower green-sand. 6. Weald clay.

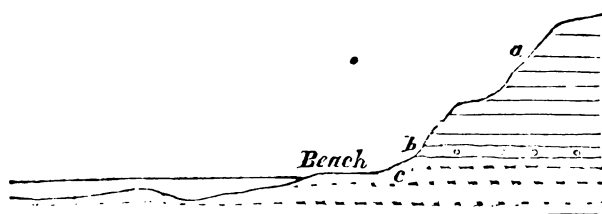
at the foot of the escarpment extends, in this case, not only over the gault, but over the "lower green-sand" to the Weald clay. On this clay a thick bed of flints, evidently derived from the waste of chalk, remains in the position above described.

When I say that there is no detritus of the chalk and its flints on the central ridge of the Weald, I may state that I have sought in vain for a vestige of such fragments; and Mr. Mantell, who has had greater opportunities of minute investigation, assures me that he has never been able to detect any. Now, whether we embrace or reject the theory of the former continuity of the chalk and other groups over the whole space intervening between the North and South Downs, we certainly cannot imagine that any transient and tumultuous rush of waters could have swept over this country, which should not have left some fragments of the chalk and its flints in the deep valleys of the Forest ridge. Indeed, if we adopt the diluvial hypothesis of Dr. Buckland, we should expect to find vast heaps of broken flints drifted frequently into the valleys of the Gault and Weald clay, instead of being generally confined to the summit of the chalk downs.

On the other hand, it is quite conceivable that the slow agency of oceanic currents may have cleared away, in the course of ages, the matter which fell into the sea from wasting cliffs. But in order that this explanation should be satisfactory, we must suppose that the rise of the land in the south-east of England was very gradual, and the subterranean movements for the most part of moderate intensity. During the last century

earthquakes have occasionally thrown down at once whole lines of sea-cliffs, for several miles continuously ; but if this had happened repeatedly during the waste of the ancient escarpments of the chalk now encircling the Weald, and if the shocks had been accompanied by the sudden rise and conversion of large districts into land, the Weald would have been covered with the ruins of those wasted rocks, and the sea could not possibly have had time to clear the whole away. The reader will recollect the account before given of the manner in which the sea has advanced, within the last century, upon the Norfolk coast at Sherringham.*

Fig. 165.

*Section of cliffs west of Sherringham.*

a. Crag.

b. Ferruginous flint breccia on the surface of the chalk.

c. Chalk with flints.

The beach, at the foot of the cliff, is composed of bare chalk with flints, as is the bed of the sea near the shore. No one would suspect, from the appearance of the beach at low water, that a few years ago beds of solid chalk, together with sand and loam of the superincumbent crag, formed land on the very spot where the waves are now rolling ; still less that these same formations extended, within the last fifty years, to a considerable distance from the present shore, over a space where the sea has now excavated a channel twenty feet deep.

As in this recent instance the ocean has cleared away part of the chalk, and its capping of crag, so the tertiary sea may have swept away not only the chalk surrounding the valley of the Weald, but the layer of broken flints on its surface, which was probably a marine alluvium of the Eocene period. Hence these flints might naturally occur on the downs, and be wanting in the valleys below.

If the reader will refer to the preceding diagrams (Figs. 162. and 163., ante, p. 411), and reflect not only on the successive states of the country there delineated, but on all the intermediate conditions which the district must have passed through during the process of gradual elevation and denudation before supposed, he will understand why no wreck of the chalk (No. 1.) should occur at great distances from the chalk escarpments ; for it is

* Vol. I. p. 252.

evident that when the ruins of the uppermost bed (No. 1. Fig. 162.) had been thrown down upon the surface of the bed immediately below, those ruins would subsequently be carried away when this inferior stratum itself was destroyed. And in proportion to the number and thickness of the groups, thus removed in succession, is the probability lessened of our finding any remnants of the highest group strewn over the bared surface of the lowest.

Transverse valleys.—There is another peculiarity in the geographical features of the south-east of England, which must not be overlooked when we are considering the action of the denuding causes. By reference to the Map (Plate XV.) the reader will perceive that the drainage of the country is not effected by water-courses following the great valleys excavated out of the argillaceous strata (Nos. 2 and 4), but by valleys which run in a transverse direction, passing through the chalk to the basin of the Thames on the one side, and to the English channel on the other.

In this manner the chain of the North Downs is broken by the rivers Wey, Mole, Darent, Medway, and Stour; the South Downs by the Arun, Adur, Ouse, and Cuckmere.*

If these transverse hollows could be filled up, all the rivers, observes Mr. Conybeare, would be forced to take an easterly course, and to empty themselves into the sea by Romney Marsh and Pevensey levels.†

Mr. Martin has suggested that the great cross fractures of the chalk, which have become river channels, have a remarkable correspondence on each side of the valley of the Weald; in several instances the gorges in the North and South Downs appearing to be directly opposed to each other. Thus, for example, the defiles of the Wey, in the North Downs, and of the Arun, in the South, seem to coincide in direction; and, in like manner, the Ouse corresponds to the Darent, and the Cuckmere to the Medway.‡

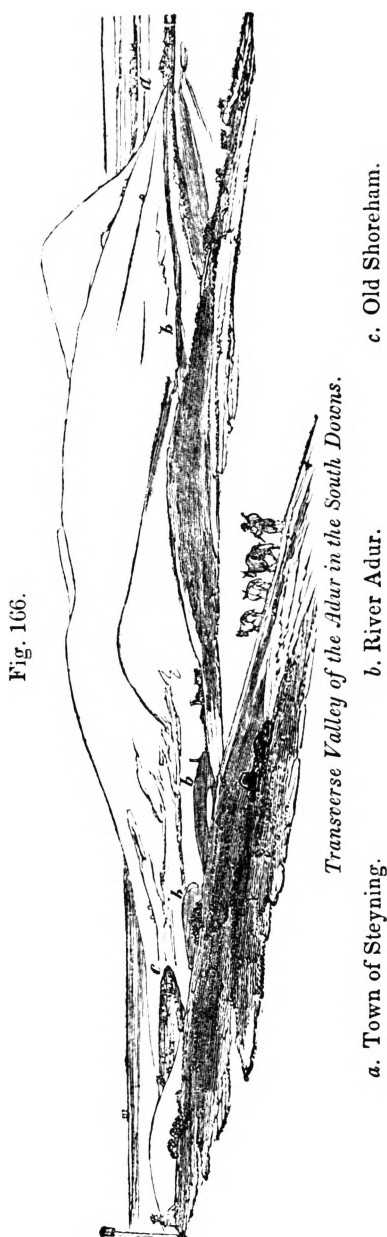
Although these coincidences may, perhaps, be accidental, it is by no means improbable, as hinted by the author above mentioned, that the great amount of elevation towards the centre of the Weald district gave rise to transverse fissures. And as the longitudinal valleys were connected with that linear movement which caused the anticlinal lines running east and west, so the cross fissures might have been occasioned by the intensity of the upheaving force towards the centre of the line, whereby the effect of a double axis of elevation was in some measure produced.

In order to give a clearer idea of the manner in which the chalk-hills are intersected by these transverse valleys, I subjoin a sketch (Fig. 166.) of the gorge of the river Adur, taken from the summit of the chalk downs, at a point in the bridle-way leading from the towns of Bramber and

* Conybeare, *Outlines of Geol.*, p. 81.

† *Ibid.*, p. 145.

‡ *Geol. of Western Sussex*, p. 61.



Steyning to Shoreham. If the reader will refer again to the view given in a former wood-cut (Fig. 159., ante, p. 407), he will there see the exact point where the gorge, of which I am now speaking, interrupts the chalk escarpment. A projecting hill, at the point *a*, hides the town of Steyning, near which the valley commences where the Adur passes directly to the sea at old Shoreham. The river flows through a nearly level plain, as do most of the others which intersect the hills of Surrey, Kent, and Sussex;

and it is evident that these openings, so far at least as they are due to aqueous erosion, have not been produced by the rivers, many of which, like the Ouse near Lewes, have filled up arms of the sea, instead of deepening the hollows which they traverse.

In regard to the origin of the transverse ravines, there can be no doubt

Fig. 167.



Supposed section of Transverse Valley.

that they are connected with lines of fracture, and perhaps, in some places, there may be an anticlinal dip on both sides of the valley, as suggested by Mr. Martin.* But this notion requires confirmation.

The ravine called the Coomb, near Lewes, affords a beautiful example,

Fig. 168.



The Coomb, near Lewes.

of the manner in which narrow openings in the chalk may have been connected with shifts and dislocations in the strata. This coomb is seen on the eastern side of the valley of the Ouse, in the suburbs of the town of Lewes. The steep declivities on each side are covered with green turf, as is the bottom, which is perfectly dry. No outward signs of disturbance are visible; and the connexion of the hollow with subterranean

* Geol. of Western Sussex, p. 64. Plate III. Fig. 3.

movements would not have been suspected by the geologist, had not the evidence of great convulsions been clearly exposed in the escarpment of the valley of the Ouse, and in the numerous chalk pits worked at the termination of the Coomb. By aid of these we discover that the ravine coincides precisely with a line of fault, on one side of which the chalk with flints, *a*, appears at the summit of the hill, while it is thrown down to the bottom on the other. I examined this spot in company with Mr. Mantell, to whom I am indebted for the accompanying section.

Fig. 169.

*Fault in the cliff-hills near Lewes.**a.* Chalk with flints.*b.* Lower chalk.*

The fracture here alluded to is one of those which run east and west, and of which there are many in the Weald district, parallel to the central axis of the Forest ridge.

In whatever manner the transverse gorges originated, they must evidently have formed ready channels of communication between the submarine longitudinal valleys and those deep parts of the sea wherein the tertiary strata may have accumulated. If the strips of land which first rose had been unbroken, and there had been no free passage through the cross fractures, the currents would not so easily have drifted away the materials detached from the wasting cliffs, and it would have been more difficult to understand how the wreck of the denuded strata could have been so entirely swept away from the base of the escarpments.

In the next chapter I shall resume the consideration of these subjects, especially the proofs of the former continuity of the chalk of the North and South Downs, and the probable connexion of the denudation of the Weald valley with the origin of the Eocene strata.

* For farther information, see Mantell's *Geol. of S. E. of England*, p. 352.

CHAPTER XXII.

ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH EOCENE FORMATIONS AND DENUDATION OF THE WEALD—*continued.*

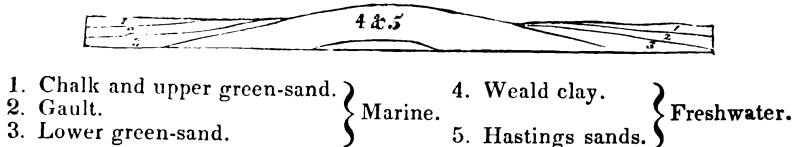
The alternative of the proposition that the chalk of the North and South Downs was once continuous, considered—Dr. Buckland on Valleys of Elevation (p. 419.)—If rise and denudation of secondary rocks gradual, so also the deposition of tertiary strata (p. 424.)—Composition of the latter such as would result from wreck of denuded secondary rocks—Central parts of the London and Hampshire basins nearly as high as Weald—Why—Curved and vertical strata in the Isle of Wight—Eocene alluviums (429.)—Formation of valleys—Recapitulation.

Extent of denudation in the Valley of the Weald.—"It would be highly rash," observes Mr. Conybeare, speaking of the denudation of the Weald, "to assume that the chalk at any period actually covered the whole space in which the inferior strata are now exposed, although the truncated form of its escarpment evidently shows it to have once extended much farther than at present."*

I believe that few geologists who have considered the extent of country supposed to have been denuded, and who have explored the hills and valleys of the central or Forest ridge, without being able to discover the slightest vestige of chalk in the alluvium,† will fail to participate, at first, in the doubts here expressed as to the original continuity of the upper secondary formations over the anticlinal axis of the Weald. For my own part I never traversed the wide space which separates the North and South Downs, without desiring to escape from the conclusions advocated in the last chapter; and yet I have been invariably brought back again to the opinion, that the chalk was originally continuous, on a more deliberate review of the whole phenomenon.

It may be useful to consider the only other alternative of the hypothesis before explained. If the marine groups, Nos. 1, 2, 3, were not

Fig. 170.



originally continuous, it is necessary to imagine that they each terminated at some point between their present outgoings and the secondary

* Outlines, p. 144.

† See ante, p. 412.

strata of the Forest ridge. Thus we might suppose them to have thinned out one after the other, as in the above diagram, and never to have covered the entire area occupied by the freshwater strata, Nos. 4 and 5.

It must be granted, that had such been the original disposition of the different groups, they might, as they gradually emerged from the sea, have become denuded in the manner explained in the last chapter, so that the country might equally have assumed its present configuration. But although I know of no invincible objection to such an hypothesis, there are certainly no appearances which favour it. If the strata, Nos. 4 and 5 had been unconformable to the lower green-sand No. 3, then, indeed, we might have imagined that the older groups had been disturbed by a series of movements antecedently to the deposition of No. 3; and in that case, some parts of them might be supposed to have emerged or formed shoals in the ancient sea, interrupting the continuity of the newer marine deposits. But the group No. 4 is *conformable* to No. 3; and the only change which has been observed to take place at the junction is an occasional intermixture of the Weald clay with the superior marine sand, such as might have been caused by a slight superficial movement in the waters when the sea first overflowed the freshwater strata.

On the other hand, the green-sand and chalk, as they approach the central axis of the Weald, are not found to contain littoral shells, or any wreck of the freshwater strata, such as might indicate the existence of an island with its shores or wasting cliffs. Had any such signs been discovered, we might have supposed the geography of the region to have once borne some resemblance to that exhibited in the diagram, Fig. 170.

Dr. Buckland on Valleys of Elevation.—We are indebted to Dr. Buckland for an able memoir in illustration of several districts of similar form and structure to the Weald, which occur at no great distance in the south of England. His paper is intitled, “On the formation of the Valley of Kingsclere and other Valleys, by the elevation of the Strata which inclose them.”*

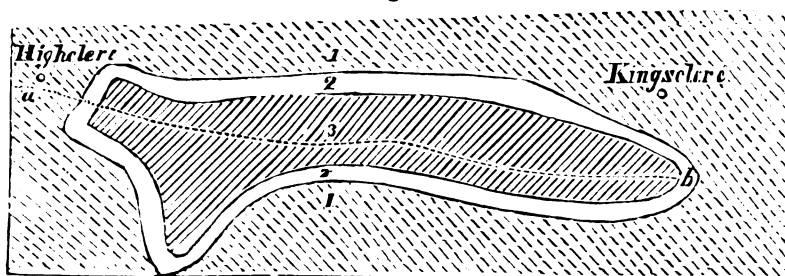
The Valley of Kingsclere, a few miles south of Newbury, in Berkshire, is about five miles long and two in breadth. The upper and lower chalk (see Fig. 173., p. 420†), and the upper green-sand dip in opposite directions from an anticlinal axis which passes through the middle of the valley along the line *a, b*, of the ground-plan (Fig. 171., p. 420).

In the wood-cut (Fig. 172., p. 420) the scale of heights more nearly approaches to that of nature, although the altitudes, in proportion to the horizontal extent, are even in this, perhaps, somewhat in excess. On each side of the valley we find escarpments of chalk, the strata of which dip in

* Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. ii. p. 119.

† Copied by permission from Dr. Buckland's Plate XVII., Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. ii.

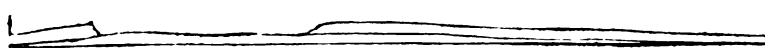
Fig. 171.

*Valley of Kingsclere.*

a, b, Anticlinal line marking the junction of the opposite dip of the strata on each side of it.

Fig. 172.

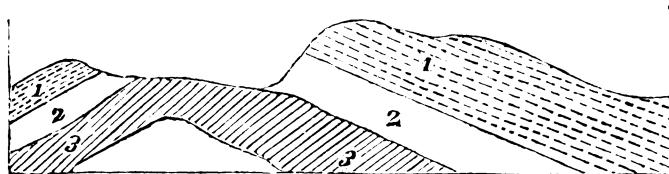
S.

*Valley of Kingsclere.*

opposite directions, in the northern escarpment to the north, and in the southern to the south. At the eastern and western extremities of the valley, the two escarpments become confluent, precisely in the same manner as do those of the North and South Downs, at the eastern end of the Weald district, near Petersfield. And as, a few miles east of the town last mentioned (see Map, Plate XV.), the fire-stone, or upper green-sand, is laid open in the sharp angle between the escarpment of the Alton Hills and the western termination of the South Downs,* so in the valley of Kingsclere the same formation is seen to crop out from beneath the chalk.

The reader might imagine, on regarding the section (Fig. 173.), where,

Fig. 173.

*Section across the Valley of Kingsclere from north to south.*

1. Chalk with flints.
2. Lower chalk without flints.
3. Upper green-sand, or firestone, containing beds of chert.

N. B. The lines here are not intended to represent strata.

for the sake of elucidating the geological phenomena, the heights are exaggerated in proportion to the horizontal extent, that the solution of

* See Mr. Murchison's Map, Plate XIV., Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. ii.

continuity of the strata bounding the Valley of Kingsclere had been simply due to elevation and fracture, unassisted by aqueous causes; but by reference to the truer scale (Fig. 172.) it will immediately appear that a considerable mass of chalk must have been removed by denudation.

If the anticlinal dip had been confined to the Valley of Kingsclere, we might have supposed that the upheaving force had acted on a mere point, forcing upwards the superincumbent strata into a small dome-shaped eminence, the crown of which had been subsequently cut off; but Dr. Buckland traced the line of opposite dip far beyond the confluence of the chalk escarpments, and found that it was prolonged in a more north-west direction, far beyond the point *a*, (Fig. 171.). In following the line thus extended, the strata are seen in numerous chalk-pits to have an opposite dip on either side of a central axis, from which we may clearly infer the linear direction of the movement.

Many of the valleys having a similar conformation to that of Kingsclere, run east and west, like the anticlinal ridge of the Weald valley. Several of these occur in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, and they are all circumscribed by an escarpment whose component strata dip outwards from an anticlinal line running along the central axis of the valley. One of these, distant about seven miles to the north-east of Weymouth, is nearly elliptical in shape, and in size does not much exceed the Coliseum at Rome. Their drainage is generally effected in a manner analogous to the drainage of the Weald, by an aperture in one of their lateral escarpments, and not at either extremity of their longer axis, as would have happened had they been simply excavated by the sweeping force of rapid water.*

“It will be seen,” continues Dr. Buckland, “if we follow on Mr. Greenough’s Map the south-western escarpment of the chalk in the counties of Wilts and Dorset, that, at no great distance from these small elliptical valleys of elevation, there occur several longer and larger valleys, forming deep notches, as it were, in the lofty edge of the chalk. These are of similar structure to the smaller valleys we have been considering, and consist of green-sand, inclosed by chalk at one extremity, and flanked by two escarpments of the same, facing each other with an opposite dip; but they differ in the circumstances of their other and broader extremity being without any such inclosure, and gradually widening till it is lost in the expanse of the adjacent country.

“The cases I now allude to are the vale of Pewsey, to the east of Devizes; that of the Wily, to the east of Warminster; and the Valley of the Nadder, extending from Shaftesbury to Barford, near Salisbury; in which last not only the strata of green-sand are brought to the surface, but also the still lower formations of Purbeck and Portland beds, and of Kimmeridge clay.

* Dr. Buckland, *Geol. Trans.*, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 122.

“It might at first sight appear that these valleys are nothing more than simple valleys of denudation; but the fact of the strata composing their escarpments having an opposite and outward dip from the axis of the valley, and this often at a high angle, as near Fonthill and Barford, in the Vale of the Nadder, and at Oare, near the base of Martinsell Hill, in the Vale of Pewsey, obliges us to refer their inclination to some antecedent violence, analogous to that to which I have attributed the position of the strata in the inclosed valleys near Kingsclere, Ham, and Burbage. Nor is it probable that without some pre-existing fracture or opening in the lofty line of the great chalk escarpment, which is here presented to the north-west, the power of water alone would have forced open three such deep valleys as those in question, without causing them to maintain a more equable breadth, instead of narrowing till they end in a point in the body of the chalk.”*

Now, in the Weald, the strata of the North Downs are inclined to the north at an angle of from 10° to 15° , or even 45° , in the narrow ridge of the Hog’s Back, west of Guildford, in Surrey; whilst those in the South Downs dip to the south at a slight angle. It is superfluous to dwell on the analogy which, in this respect, the two escarpments bear to those which flank the valleys above alluded to; and in regard to the greater distance which separates the hills of Surrey from those of Sussex, the difficulty may be reduced simply to a question of time.

If the rise of the land was accomplished by an indefinite number of minor convulsions, or by a slow and insensible upheaving like that now taking place in Sweden, the power of the ocean would be fully adequate to perform the work of denudation in the lapse of many ages. If, on the other hand, we embrace the hypothesis of paroxysmal elevation; or, in other words, suppose a submarine tract to have been converted instantaneously into high land, we may seek in vain for any known cause capable of sweeping away even those portions of chalk and other rocks which, all are agreed, must once have formed the prolongation of the existing escarpments. It is common in such cases to call in one imaginary cause to support another; and as the upheaving force operated with sudden violence, so a vast diluvial wave is introduced to carry away, with almost equal celerity, the mountain mass of strata assumed to have been stripped off.

Some geologists have endeavoured to account for the structure of the districts described as “valleys of elevation,” by the aid of Von Buch’s theory of “elevation craters,” in which case they can dispense both with time and denudation. It would be superfluous to repeat what has been already said of the hypothetical agency here referred to;† but it may be

* Dr. Buckland, Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. ii. p. 123.

† Vol. I. p. 357.

well to consider whether the upheaving of small dome-shaped masses, such as those described by Dr. Buckland, implies the development at a considerable depth of volcanic forces acting with great violence on limited areas, or mere points of the earth's crust.

A theory suggested by Dr. Fitton appears to me far more probable. Suppose a series of horizontal strata, composed in great part of sand and soft clay, to repose on a foundation of older and more solid rocks presenting an uneven surface, varied by hills, valleys, and ridges, like many parts of the land and bed of the sea. If a force acting from beneath should then elevate the whole mass, the protuberances of the subjacent rocks would be forced up against the more compressible strata which covered them. The effect of the pressure might be the same as that which happens on a small scale in a bound book, when a minute inequality or knob in the paper of some page is propagated through a great number of others, imparting its shape to all, without piercing through them.* The observations of Dolomieu on the manner in which the more yielding tertiary strata of Calabria were displaced by the granite during the earthquake of 1783, lends some countenance to this theory.†

In the last chapter I pointed out the phenomena which seem to indicate that the elevation and denudation of land in the south-east of England were gradual.‡ The same arguments are in a great degree applicable to the basins of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; but Mr. Conybeare has contended that the verticality of the strata in the Isle of Wight and in Purbeck compels us to admit that the movement there was so violent, that the vertical strata, which have been traced through a district nearly sixty miles in length, were brought into their present position by a *single convulsion*.

It may well be asked what ground is there for assuming that a *single* effort of the subterranean force, rather than reiterated movements, produced that sharp flexure of which the vertical strata of the Isle of Wight are supposed to form a part, the remainder of the arc having been carried away by denudation?§

It is not improbable that the Cutch earthquake of 1819, before alluded to, may have produced an incipient curve, running in a linear direction through a tract at least sixty miles in length.|| The strata were upraised in the Ullah Bund, and depressed below the level of the sea in the adjoining tract, where the fort of Sindree was submerged. (See Plate V.) It would be impossible, if the next earthquake should raise the Bund still higher, and sink to a lower depth the adjoining tract, to discriminate, by

* Dr. Fitton, Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. iv. p. 244, 1834.

† See Vol. I. p. 395.

‡ Ante, p. 410.

§ See Webster, Englefield's Isle of Wight, Plate XLII. Fig. 1.

|| See Vol. I. p. 382, 383; and Vol. II. p. 155.

any geological investigations, the different effects of the two earthquakes, unless a minute survey of the effects of the first shock had been made and put on record. In this manner we may suppose the strata to be bent again and again, in the course of future ages, until parts of them become perpendicular.

To some it may appear that there is a unity of effect in the line of de-ranged strata in the Isles of Wight and Purbeck, as also in the central axis of the Weald, which is inconsistent with the supposition of a great number of separate movements recurring after long intervals of time. But we know that earthquakes are repeated throughout a long series of ages, in the same spots, like volcanic eruptions. The oldest lavas of Etna were poured out many thousands, perhaps myriads of years, before the newest, and yet they have produced a symmetrical mountain; and if rivers of melted matter thus continue to flow in the same direction, and towards the same points, for an indefinite lapse of ages, what difficulty is there in conceiving that the subterranean volcanic force, occasioning the rise or fall of certain parts of the earth's crust, may, by reiterated movements, produce the most perfect unity of result?

If denudation of secondary rocks gradual, so also deposition of tertiary.—It follows, then, from the facts examined in this and the preceding chapter, that subsequently to the deposition of the chalk a large region composed of secondary strata has been denuded, and that the lapse of many ages must have been required for the entire removal of the materials from the denuded district.

It is no less evident that the transported matter must have been deposited by degrees somewhere else. Are there any tracts in the south-east of England, where we find derivative strata composed of a mixture of such mineral ingredients as would result from the degradation of the secondary groups Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5? The tertiary strata of the London and Hampshire basins answer well to the conditions required by such an origin, for they consist of alternations of variously coloured sands and clays, as do the secondary strata from the group No. 5 to No. 2 inclusive. Some tertiary green-sand, which occurs in parts of the plastic clay formation in the basins of London and Hants, cannot be distinguished mineralogically from a large part of that which is found in the secondary formations below the chalk.

If it be asked, where do we find the ruins of the *white chalk* among our Eocene strata?—the answer is, first that the flint pebbles which are associated in such immense abundance with the sands of the plastic clay, are derived evidently from the destruction of chalk, and contain the same fossils: secondly, that as to the soft, white, calcareous matrix, we may suppose it to have been easily reduced to fine sediment, and to have contributed, when in a state of perfect solution, to form the shells of Eocene testacea; or when mixed with the waste of the argillaceous groups, Nos.

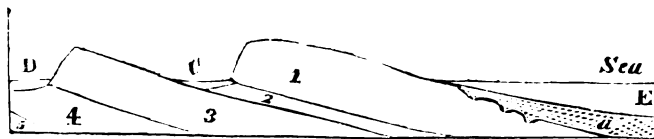
2 and 4, which have been peculiarly exposed to denudation, it may have entered into the composition of the London clay, which contains no slight proportion of calcareous matter. In the *crag* of Norfolk, undoubtedly, we find great heaps of broken pieces of white chalk, with slightly worn and angular flints; but, in this case, we may infer that the attrition was not continued for a long time; whereas, the large accumulations of perfectly rolled shingle, which are interstratified with our Eocene formations, prove that they were acted upon for a protracted period by the waves. We have many opportunities of witnessing the entire demolition of the chalk on our southern coast, as at Seaford, for example, in Sussex, where large masses are, year after year, detached from the cliffs, and soon disappear, leaving nothing behind but a great bank of flint shingle.*

It may also be remarked that the white chalk in the north of England, as in Yorkshire, for example, is much harder than the corresponding formation in the southern counties, where it is now so soft that we may imagine it to have been in the state of mud when submerged beneath the waters of the sea. An original difference of this kind in the degree of induration may explain the fact, that in certain districts gravel composed of chalk-flint occurs without any pebbles of white chalk, while in other regions rounded boulders of white chalk are plentifully intermixed with pebbles of flint.

The similarity, then, of the mineral ingredients of the Eocene secondary strata affords alone some presumption in favour of this newer group having been derived from the wreck of the older series. But it is also natural to expect, that when the formations of the Weald were emerging, there would be some contiguous parts of the sea sufficiently deep to receive the drift matter.

We may suppose, that while the waves and currents were excavating the longitudinal valleys, D and C (Fig 174.), "the deposits *a* were

Fig. 174.



thrown down to the bottom of the contiguous deep water E, the sediment being drifted through transverse fissures, as before explained. In this case, the rise of the formations Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, may have been going on contemporaneously with the excavation of the valleys C and D, and with the accumulation of the strata *a*. There must be innumerable points on our own coast where the sea is of great depth near to islands

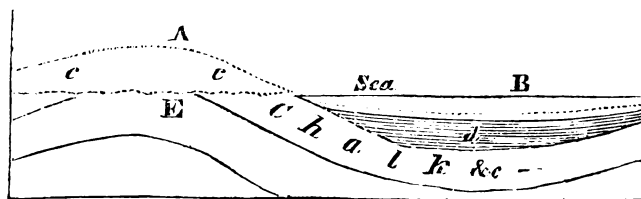
* Vol. I. p. 264.

and cliffs now exposed to rapid waste, and in all these the denuding and reproductive processes must be going on in the immediate proximity of each other.

English Eocene strata rise nearly as high as the denuded secondary districts.—Those geologists who have hitherto regarded the rise and denudation of the lands in the south-east of England as events altogether posterior in date to the deposition of the London clay, will object to the foregoing reasoning, that not only certain outlying patches of tertiary strata, but even the central parts of the London and Hampshire basins, attain very considerable altitudes above the level of the sea. Thus the London clay at Highbeach, in Essex, reaches the height of 750 feet; an elevation exceeding that of large districts of the chalk and other denuded secondary rocks. But these facts do not, I think, militate against the theory above proposed, since I have endeavoured to show that there must have been a long-continued series of elevatory movements in a region where both the degradation and reproduction of strata were in progress.

In order to explain this view, I shall assume that in the region A (Fig. 175.), the chalk and associated strata are raised and converted into

Fig. 175.



land; while in the adjoining district, B, a contiguous part of the same beds remains submerged beneath the sea. During the elevation in A, the mass *c c* is gradually removed by denudation, and its ruins drifted to B, forming the tertiary deposit *d*. The force of water has thus exerted an antagonist power; so that, in spite of the upheaving movement, the general outline of the solid surface, or the relative levels of its various parts, are not greatly altered; for the uppermost part of the newer deposit *d* rises nearly as high as the remaining summits of the denuded country A. After all these changes and levelling operations, an elevation to the amount of eight hundred feet in both the regions A and B, would cause the secondary rocks of A to acquire much the same height above the level of the sea, as the tertiary beds would attain in B.

The estimate of Mr. Martin is not, perhaps, exaggerated, when he computes the probable thickness of strata removed from the highest part of the Forest ridge to be about 1900 feet: so that, if we restore to Crowborough Hill, in Sussex, the beds of Weald clay, lower green-sand, gault, and chalk, which have been removed by denudation, that hill, instead of rising to the height of eight hundred feet, would be more than trebled in

altitude, and be about 2700 feet high.* It would then tower far above the highest outliers of tertiary strata which are scattered over our chalk; for Inkpen Hill, in Berkshire, the greatest elevation of chalk in England, rises only 1011 feet above the level of the sea.

Some geologists, who have thought it necessary to suppose all the strata of the London and Hampshire basins to have been once continuous have estimated the united thickness of the three marine Eocene groups before described, as amounting to 1300 feet, and have been bold enough to imagine a mass of this height to have been once superimposed upon the chalk which formerly covered the axis of the Weald.† Hence they were led to infer that Crowborough Hill was once four thousand feet high, and was then cut down from four thousand to eight hundred feet by *diluvial action*.

But by adopting the view above explained, that the Eocene deposits originated while the chalk and other secondary rocks were rising from the sea and wasting away, we shall find it unnecessary to suppose any removal of formations newer than the chalk, from the central parts of the Weald.

Vertical strata of the Isle of Wight.—A line of vertical and inclined strata, running east and west, or parallel to the central axis of the Weald, extends, as has been stated, through the Isles of Wight and Purbeck, and through Dorsetshire, and has been observed by Dr. Fitton to reappear in France, north of Boulogne. The same strata which are elevated in the Weald valley are upheaved on this line also; and in the Isle of Wight, all the tertiary strata appear to have partaken in the same movement.‡

From the horizontality of the freshwater series in Alum Bay, as contrasted with the vertical position of the marine tertiary beds, Mr. Webster was at first led very naturally to conclude, that the marine had undergone great derangement before the deposition of the freshwater strata. It appears, however, from the subsequent observations of Professor Sedgwick,§ that these appearances are deceptive; and that at the eastern extremity of the Isle of Wight, part of the freshwater series is vertical, like the marine. Hence it is now ascertained that, as the chalk is horizontal at the southern extremity of the Isle of Wight, while it is vertical in the centre of that island, so the Eocene strata are horizontal in the north of the island, and vertical in the centre.

An important corollary is deduced from the discovery above mentioned; namely, that the convulsions which brought the Isle of Wight group into

* Phil. Mag. and Annals, No. 26., New Series, p. 117.

† Martin, *ibid*.

‡ See Mr. Webster's section, Geol. Trans., vol. ii. First Series, Plate XI.

§ Anniv. Address to the Geol. Soc., Feb. 1831, p. 9. Professor Sedgwick informs me that his observations, made in 1827, have recently been confirmed by Professor Henslow.

their present position were, in a great part if not entirely, subsequent to the deposition of the freshwater beds, or upper members of the Eocene formation. They may, however, have been contemporaneous with those movements which raised the central parts of the London and Hampshire basins to their present height. Referring again to the diagram, Fig. 175., ante, p. 426, we may imagine the series of elevatory movements in the S. E. of England to be divided into two parts: first, that which caused the elevation and denudation of the central axis of the Weald in A; secondly, that which uplifted the denuded surface E, together with the tertiary formations *d*, to their actual height. Now, this last set of movements may have occurred before the close of the Eocene period, and may have produced that curve in the stratified rocks of the Isle of Wight, in which the freshwater beds there have participated.

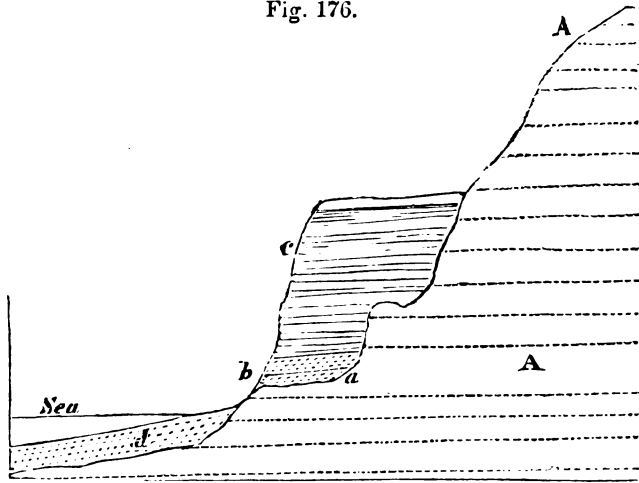
At the same time great movements of elevation have been experienced in the south of England, at periods decidedly post-Eocene; as, for example, those by which the crag strata attained their present position in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. The formation also called by Mr. Mantell the Elephant Bed, at the foot of the chalk cliffs at Brighton, is not merely a talus of calcareous rubble collected at the base of an inland cliff, but exhibits every appearance of having been spread out in successive horizontal layers by water in motion.

The deposit alluded to skirts the shores between Brighton and Rottingdean, and another mass apparently of the same age occurs at Dover. The phenomena appear to me to suggest the following conclusions:—First, the south-eastern part of England had acquired its actual configuration when the ancient chalk cliff A *a* was formed (Fig. 176.), the beach of sand and shingle *b* having then been thrown up at the base of the cliff. Afterwards the whole coast, or at least that part of it where the elephant bed now extends, subsided to the depth of fifty or sixty feet, and during the period of submergence successive layers of white calcareous rubble *c* were accumulated, so as to cover the ancient beach *b*. Subsequently, the coast was again raised, so that the ancient shore was elevated to a level somewhat higher than its original position.*

Eocene alluviums.—The discovery, before mentioned, of the genera *Palæotherium* and *Anoplotherium* at Binstead, associated with fossil shells of well-known Eocene species, is interesting, as showing that England, or rather the space now occupied by part of our island, as well as the country of the Paris basin, and Auvergne, Cantal, and Velay, were all inhabited, during the Eocene period, by a class of land animals of a very peculiar type.

* See Mantell's *Geol. of S. E. of England*, p. 32. After re-examining the elephant bed in 1834, I was no longer in doubt of its having been a regular subaqueous deposit.

Fig. 176.



- A.** Chalk with layers of flint dipping slightly to the south.
b. Ancient beach, consisting of fine sand, from one to four feet thick, covered by shingle from five to eight feet thick of pebbles of chalk-flint, granite, and other rocks, with broken shells, &c.
c. Elephant bed, about fifty feet thick, consisting of layers of white chalk rubble, with broken chalk flints, in which deposit are found bones of ox, deer, horse, and mammoth.*

Yet we have never found a single fragment of the bones of any of these quadrupeds in our alluviums or cave breccias. In these formations we find the bones of the mastodon and mammoth, of the rhinoceros, hippopotamus, lion, hyæna, bear, and other quadrupeds, all of extinct species. Where, then, are the terrestrial alluviums of that surface which was inhabited by the Paleothere and its congeners?

It is difficult to answer this question; but it seems clear that a peculiar and rare combination of favourable circumstances is required to preserve mammiferous or, indeed, any remains in terrestrial alluviums, in sufficient quantity to afford the geologist the means of assigning the date of such deposits. For this reason we are scarcely able, at present, to form any conjecture as to the relative ages of the numerous alluviums which cover the surface of Scotland; a country which probably became land long before the commencement of the tertiary epochs.

Excavation of Valleys.—It will be seen that the excavation of the valleys in the S. E. of England has been referred chiefly to the ocean.

Those geologists who contend that the valleys in England are not due to what they term “modern causes,” are in the habit of appealing to the fact that the rivers in the interior of England are working no sensible alterations, and could never in their present state, not even in millions of years,

* Mantell's Geol. of S. E. of England, p. 32.

have excavated the valleys through which they now flow. A false theory seems to be involved even in the term "modern causes," as if it could be assumed that there were *ancient causes*, differing from those which are now in operation. But if we substitute the phrase "existing causes," we shall find that the argument now controverted amounts to little more than this,—“that in a country free from subterranean movements, the action of running water is so trifling, that it could never hollow out, in any lapse of ages, a deep system of valleys, and, *therefore*, no known combination of existing causes could ever have given rise to our present valleys !”

The advocates of these doctrines, in their anxiety to point out the supposed absurdity of attributing to ordinary causes those inequalities of hill and dale, which now diversify the earth's surface, have too often kept entirely out of view the many recorded examples of elevations and subsidences of land during earthquakes ; the frequent fissuring of mountains and opening of chasms ; the temporary damming up of rivers by landslips, followed by their sudden and impetuous escape ; the deflexion of streams from their original courses ; and, more important, perhaps, than all these, the denuding power of the ocean, during the rise of continents from the deep. Few of the ordinary causes of change, whether igneous or aqueous, can be observed to act with their full intensity in any one place at the same time : hence it is easy to persuade those who have not reflected long and profoundly on the working of the numerous igneous and aqueous agents, that they are entirely inadequate to bring about any important fluctuations in the configuration of the earth's surface.

Recapitulation.—I shall now briefly recapitulate some of the principal conclusions to which I have arrived respecting the geology of the south-east of England, in reference to the nature and origin of the Eocene formations considered in this and the two preceding chapters.

1. In the first place, it appears that the tertiary strata rest exclusively upon the chalk, and consist, with some trifling exceptions, of alternations of clay and sand.

2. The organic remains agree with those of the Paris basin ; but the *mineral character* of the English tertiary deposits is extremely different, those rocks in particular which are common to the Paris basin and Central France being wanting, or extremely rare in England.

3. The English Eocene deposits are generally conformable to the chalk, being horizontal where the beds of chalk are horizontal, and vertical where they are vertical ; so that both series of rocks appear to have participated in nearly the same movements.

4. It is not possible to define the limits of the ancient borders of the tertiary sea in the south-east of England, in the same manner as can be frequently done in those countries where the secondary rocks are unconformable to the tertiary.

5. Although the tertiary deposits are chiefly confined to the tracts called the basins of London and Hampshire, insulated patches of them are, nevertheless, found on some of the highest summits of the chalk intervening between these basins.

6. These outliers, however, do not necessarily prove that the great mass of tertiary strata was once continuous between the basins of London and Hampshire, and over other parts of the south-east of England now occupied by secondary rocks.

7. On the contrary, it is probable that these secondary districts were gradually elevated and denuded, when the basins of London and Hampshire were still submarine, and while they were gradually becoming filled up with tertiary sand and clay.

8. If, in illustration of this theory, we examine one of the districts thus supposed to have been denuded, we find in the valley of the Weald decided proofs, that an immense mass of chalk and other secondary formations has been removed by the force of water.

9. We may infer, from the existence in the Weald of large valleys along the outcrop of the softer beds, and of parallel chains of hills where harder rocks come up to the surface, that water was the removing cause; and from the shape of the escarpments presented by the harder rocks, and the distribution of alluvium, we may also conclude that the denudation was successive and gradual during the rise of the strata.

10. The materials carried away from the denuded districts were probably conveyed into the depths of the contiguous sea, through channels produced by cross fractures which have since become river-channels, and which now intersect the chalk in a direction at right angles to the general axis of elevation of the country.

11. The analogous structure of the valley of Kingsclere, and of other valleys which run east and west, like the valley of the Weald, but are much narrower, accords with the hypothesis, that they were all produced by the denuding power of water co-operating with elevatory movements.

12. The mineral composition of the materials thus supposed to have been removed in immense abundance from the valley of the Weald, are such as would, by degradation, form the English Eocene strata.

13. The movements which threw the chalk and the tertiary strata of the Isles of Wight and Purbeck into a vertical position, were subsequent to the formation of the Eocene freshwater strata of the Isle of Wight, but may possibly have occurred during the Eocene period.

14. But some movements of land in the south of England must have been posterior to the deposition of the crag; and the ancient beach, together with the "elephant bed" at Brighton, seem to imply a subsidence and elevation of comparatively modern date.

15. The masses of secondary rock which have been removed by denudation from the central axis of the Weald would, if restored, rise to more

than double the height now attained by any patches of tertiary strata in England.

16. If, therefore, the Eocene strata do not appear to occupy a much lower level than the secondary rocks from the destruction of which they have been formed, it is, perhaps, because the highest summits of the secondary formations have been cut off during the rise of the land, and thrown into those troughs where we now find the tertiary deposits.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FORMATIONS COMMONLY CALLED SECONDARY AND TRANSITION.

Ancient and Modern classification of fossiliferous strata—Formations commonly called secondary and transition—The divisions usually adopted not of equivalent value—Sketch of the principal groups—Cretaceous groups (p. 434.)—No species common to the secondary and tertiary rocks—Chasm between the Eocene and Maestricht beds—Duration of secondary periods—Wealden strata—Their relation to the marine groups above and below—Portland “dirt bed”—Oolitic group (p. 445.)—Lias—New red sandstone—Zechstein—Carboniferous group—Old red sandstone—Transition formations—Rock called Greywacké.

It was stated in a former chapter that the first rude attempt to classify rocks in chronological order was that according to which they were arranged in four groups called primitive, transition, secondary, and tertiary—the transition and secondary comprising all the stratified fossiliferous formations older than the tertiary. These ancient divisions, although not yet obsolete, have gradually become less and less fitted to represent the present state of our knowledge. It was never supposed that each of the four sections were of equivalent importance, or, in other words, that they each comprised a series of monuments relating to equal portions of the ancient history of the earth. It was, however, imagined that they followed each other in regular chronological order, and that the primary were always older than the transition; that the transition were more ancient than the secondary, and the secondary than the tertiary strata. That this opinion, though generally correct, is not strictly true in regard to the entire series called “primary,” whether stratified or unstratified, will appear in the sequel.*

* Chap. xxvii.

The fossiliferous strata have been variously grouped, according to the comparative value which different geologists have attached to different characters; some having been guided chiefly by the thickness, geographical extent, and mineralogical composition of particular sets of strata; others, by their organic remains. All, however, seem now agreed that it is by a combination of these characters that we must endeavour to decide which sets of strata should be entitled to rank as principal or independent groups. The following is an outline of the arrangement adopted in this work, which will be more fully explained by the Tables at the end of this and the 27th chapter:—

1. Tertiary, or supracretaceous*		Tertiary.
2. Cretaceous - - - -	}	Secondary.
3. Wealden - - - -		
4. Oolite, upper, middle and lower		
5. Lias - - - -		
6. New red sandstone and muschelkalk	}	Transition.
7. Magnesian limestone and zechstein		
8. Carboniferous - - -		
9. Old red sandstone - - -	}	Transition.
10. Ludlow rocks		
11. Wenlock limestone		
12. Caradoc sandstones		
13. Llandeilo flags		
14. Fossiliferous Greywacké -		

The third group, however, of the above list, or the Wealden formation, although locally of great thickness in the south-east of England, is so partial a deposit that some geologists think it should be merged in the oolite, others in the cretaceous system; to both of which propositions there are objections, as will afterwards appear. The fifth group, or lias, would by many be included in the oolites. The old red sandstone has usually been classed as the lower part of the carboniferous series; but the fossils recently found in it are so distinct from those of the coal, and, on the other hand, from those of the underlying Ludlow rocks, that it seems fairly entitled, on these grounds as well as from its great thickness in parts of England and Scotland, to stand as a separate section.

Among other objections to the above classification it may be said that the tertiary group comprehending all the deposits from the Eocene strata to the Newer Pliocene inclusive, is of greater importance than many of the other divisions. It may also be suggested that the oolitic formation

* For tertiary, Mr. De la Beche has used the term "supracretaceous," a name implying that the strata so called are superior in position to the chalk.

† For explanation of the term "Silurian," see p. 451, post.

might admit of three subdivisions, each as much entitled to rank as an independent formation as the lias. The following would, perhaps, be a nearer approximation to an arrangement in which the leading divisions would be of equivalent value, as estimated by the successive changes in organic life implied by the imbedded fossil remains and by the geographical extent and thickness of the strata :—

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Pliocene. | 11. New red sandstone and Muschelkalk. |
| 2. Miocene. | 12. Magnesian limestone and Zechstein. |
| 3. Eocene. | 13. Carboniferous formation. |
| 4. Maestricht and Chalk. | 14. Old red sandstone. |
| 5. Green-sand. | 15. Ludlow rocks. |
| 6. Wealden. | 16. Wenlock limestone. |
| 7. Upper Oolite. | 17. Caradoc sandstone. |
| 8. Middle Oolite. | 18. Llandeilo flags. |
| 9. Lower Oolite. | 19. Fossiliferous Greywacké. |
| 10. Lias. | |

It is not my intention to enter at present upon a detailed description of the fossiliferous formations older than the tertiary, the elucidation of which might well occupy another volume. The observations about to be offered have chiefly for their object to show how far the rules of interpretation adopted for the tertiary formations are applicable to the phenomena of the older sedimentary rocks.

PRINCIPAL GROUPS. (*Descending Series.*)

1. *Cretaceous Group.*—*Strata from the Chalk of Maestricht to the Lower Green-sand inclusive.*—F, Table I. p. 454.

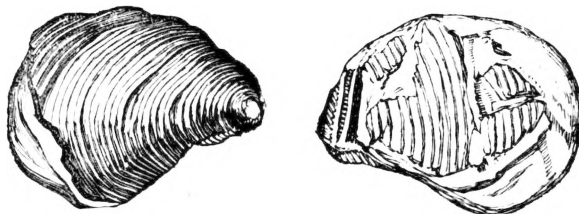
The principal subdivisions of this group, as it occurs in England and in several countries of the North of Europe, will be found on consulting Table I. Group F. They are six in number, namely ;—1. The Maestricht beds, —2. The chalk with flints,—3. The chalk without flints,—4. The upper green-sand,—5. The gault,—6. The lower green-sand. The newest of these deposits is well seen at St. Peter's Mount, Maestricht, and at Ciply, near Mons, reposing on the upper flinty chalk of England and France. It is a soft yellowish stone, not very unlike chalk, and “ includes siliceous masses, which are much more rare than those of the chalk, of greater bulk, and not composed of black flint, but of chert and calcedony.”*

It is characterized by a peculiar assemblage of organic remains, perfectly distinct from those of the tertiary period. M. Deshayes, after a careful comparison, and after making drawings of more than two hundred species of the Maestricht shells, has been unable to identify any one of them with the numerous tertiary fossils in his collection. On the other

* Fitton, Proceedings of Geol. Soc. 1830.

hand, there are several shells which are decidedly common to the calcareous beds of Maestricht and the white chalk ; as, for example, the twelve following species, of which the names have been communicated to me by M. Deshayes :—*Catillus Cuvieri* (Fig. 177.) (specimens imperfect),

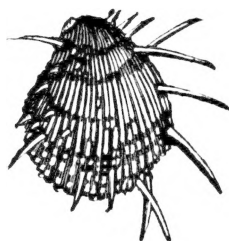
Fig. 177.



Catillus Cuvieri. Syn. *Inoceramus Cuvieri*, Sow. Chalk with flints.

Plagiostoma spinosum (Fig. 180.), *P. Hoperi* (Fig. 179.), *Pecten fragilissimus*, *Ostrea vesicularis* (see Fig. 186.), *O. carinata* (Fig. 182.), *Crania Parisiensis* (Fig. 178.), *Terebratula octoplicata* (Fig. 183.), *T. carnea*

Fig. 180.



Plagiostoma spinosum.

Fig. 179.



Plagiostoma Hoperi.

Fig. 178.



Crania Parisiensis,
inferior or attached
valve.

Fig. 182.



Ostrea carinata,
characteristic of Upper Green-sand.

Fig. 181.



Terebratula Defranci.

Fig. 184.



Terebratula pumilus.
(*Magas pumilus*, Sow.)

Fig. 183.



Terebratula octoplicata.
(Var. of *T. plicatilis*.)

Fig 185.

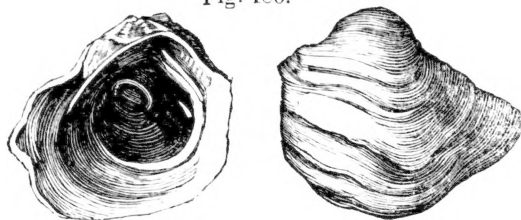


Terebratula carnea.

(Fig. 185.), *T. pumilus* (Magas, Sow.), (Fig. 184.), *T. Defranci* (Fig. 181.), *Belemnites mucronatus* (Fig. 187.).

But the fossils of the Maestricht beds extend not merely into the white chalk of the French geologists, but into their "chloritic, or green-sand," which corresponds with the upper green-sand of the English geologists. The following five species of shells have been recognised by M. Deshayes as common to the Maestricht beds and the upper green-sand of France:—*Plagiostoma spinosum* (Fig. 180.), *Ostrea vesicularis* (Fig. 186.),

Fig. 186.

*Ostrea vesicularis* (*Gryphæa globosa*, Sow.)

O. carinata (Fig. 182.), *Belemnites mucronatus* (Fig. 187.), and *Baculites Faujasii* (Fig. 188.).

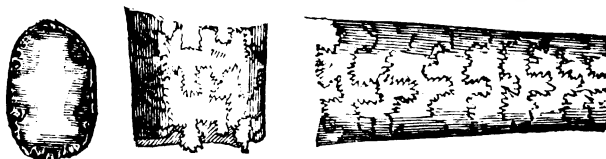
a Fig. 187. b



a. *Belemnites mucronatus*.
b. Same, internal structure.

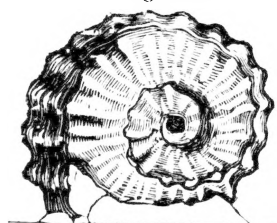
Fig. 188.

Fig. 189.

*Baculites Faujasii*.*Baculites anceps*, Chalk.

Count Munster has shown me, among the fossils which he himself collected at Maestricht, three species of ammonite, among which is *A.*

Fig. 190.

*Ammonites Rhotomagensis*.

Rhotomagensis (Defrance); also a species of *Hamite*, and *Hippurites Desmoulinsi* (Golf). The same eminent naturalist has discovered no less than forty species of microscopic foraminifera in the same formation, all of species distinct from any known either as recent or tertiary, and many of new genera. There is also an ammonite, obtained from the Maestricht limestone by Dr. Fitton, now in the museum of the Geological Society of London. The occurrence of these

ammonites and species of kindred genera, such as the *Baculite* and *Hamite*, as also the *Belemnite*, is important, as showing that the subdivision (No. 1) now under consideration should be classed as the newest member of the secondary series, rather than as a link between it and the tertiary. No shell hitherto found, even in the oldest or Eocene tertiary formations, minutely as these have been investigated, could be mistaken, either for the ammonite or belemnite, the nearest approach to the ammonite being

Fig. 191.



Beloptera belemnitoidea,
Sow.
London and Paris basins.

the nautilus, and the tertiary fossil which comes nearest to the belemnite being the *Beloptera* of the London and Paris basins (Fig. 191.). We can scarcely expect, therefore, to discover in existing tropical seas any living representatives of those curious cephalopoda, ammonites and belemnites, which evidently swarmed in the ocean when the cretaceous and many preceding groups of strata were formed. They even seem to have become entirely extinct, at least in European latitudes, before the commencement of the Eocene period.

The rock commonly known as chalk preserves its peculiar mineral character throughout a considerable area in Europe, but it is rarely of such thickness as in many parts of the south-east of England, where horizontally stratified masses about one thousand feet thick, are composed of it. Its upper member in this country is usually called the "chalk with flints;" but above this mass there is in some places another deposit of white chalk without flints, which was found, by boring at Diss, in Norfolk, to attain a thickness of 100 feet.* The chalk stretches over a large part of our island, and recurs in the north of Ireland, is found in Denmark and the south of Sweden, and even in Poland and part of Russia. In France it surrounds and underlies the strata of the Paris basin before described (see Map, Fig. 156., ante p. 396), from whence it stretches northward into Belgium and the north of Germany, and southward to the basin of the Gironde. I have seen it, still retaining nearly all the same characters, between Bordeaux and Dax; but it changes its aspect greatly on the flanks of the Pyrenees, where its identity can only be established by the similarity

a

Fig. 192.

b



a. *Hippurites bioculata*, Lamk. } Lo^wer chalk, South of France.
b. *H. radiosa*, Desmoulins, Opercular valve.

* Proceedings of Geol. Soc., vol. ii. p. 93.

of its fossil remains. Even the white chalk, however, varies considerably in its texture, in proportion as we depart from the great central deposit of Europe. In some parts, for example, of the south of France, it becomes oolitic. Here also it contains, together with shells which abound in the north, many other species peculiar to more southern districts, especially of the genera spherulite, hippurite, and nummulite.*

The other divisions of the cretaceous group, Nos. 4, 5, and 6, consist of sand and clays, which have also a wide geographical range. The position of the gault and lower green-sand, relatively to the formations of the white and flinty chalk before alluded to, has been elucidated in diagram Fig. 157., ante, p. 406. The fossils of the inferior arenaceous and

Fig. 193.

a. *Terebratula lyra*.

b. Same, seen in profile. } Upper green-sand.

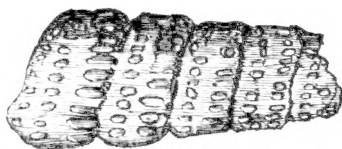
Fig. 194.

*Pecten 5 costatus*.
Upper and lower
green-sand.

argillaceous groups are upon the whole very different from those of the chalk before described, but there are many species common to these two great divisions.

a

Fig. 195.

a. *Turrilites costatus*, Gault.

b



b. Same, showing the indurated border of the partition of the chambers.

The testacea obtained from the entire cretaceous system amount to about one thousand; and if, for the sake of classification, we refer every set of strata in Europe which are characterized by these organic remains to one period, we immediately comprehend in it rocks of every variety of mineral composition, yet which always occupy a determinate place in the order of superposition intervening between the tertiary strata and those of the Oolitic period.

In the cretaceous group, thus distinguished, we behold in the Pyrenees and in Spain compact and crystalline marbles, masses of gypsum and salt, puddingstones, red sandstone, thin shales and grits, containing impress-

* Dufrenoy, Bulletin de la Soc. Géol. de France, tom. i. p. 11.

ions of marine plants and other rocks, to which there is nothing analogous in formations of the same age in northern Europe.

It appears, by the researches of MM. Boblaye and Virlet, that in the Morea a great cretaceous system occurs, composed of compact and lithographic limestones of great thickness; also of granular limestones, with jasper; and in some districts, as in Messenia, a puddingstone with a siliceous cement more than 1600 feet in thickness.*

It is evident, observe these geologists, from the great range of the hippurite and nummulite limestone, a rock belonging to the same era, that the South of Europe was occupied at the period of the cretaceous depositions by an immense sea, which extended from the Atlantic Ocean into Asia, and comprehended the South of France, together with Spain, Sicily, part of Italy, and the Austrian Alps, Dalmatia, Albania, a portion of Syria, the isles of the Ægean, coasts of Thrace, and the Troad.

The plants found in the chalk of England and France are chiefly marine. Some wood has been occasionally met with, both in the chalky rock and its flints, having the appearance of being drifted, and commonly marked with the perforations of boring shells, such as the *Teredo* and *Fistulana*.† In Sweden, M. Nilsson has found beds of lignite associated with our common chalk fossils;‡ so that we may conclude that forests grew on the lands of this period, wherever these may have been placed; but as yet their site is mere matter of conjecture.

The testacea, zoophytes, crustacea, and fishes, are marine, and no bones of mammiferous quadrupeds or birds have yet been discovered; but in the Maestricht beds large turtles have been found, and a gigantic reptile, the *Mosasaurus*, or fossil Monitor, of Maestricht, some of the vertebræ of which appear also in the English chalk.§ The osteological characters of this oviparous quadruped prove it to have been intermediate between the living Monitors and Iguanas; and, from the size of the head, vertebræ, and other bones, it is supposed to have been twenty-four feet in length.

In reviewing the facts above enumerated, I may first call attention to the important circumstance that no species of fossil shell has yet been found common to the secondary and tertiary formations; a fact stated on the authority of M. Deshayes, who assures me that he has seen no *tertiary* shells in the Gosau beds, supposed by some geologists to be intermediate between the secondary and tertiary formations. On the other hand, some of the most characteristic species of Gosau occur in the green-sand beneath the chalk, at Ciply, south of Mons, in Belgium, and at some neighbouring places which I have visited. Count Munster also informs me, that

* Bull de la Soc. Géol de France, tom. iii. p. 149.

† Mantell, Geol. of S. E. of England, p. 96.

‡ *Petrificata Suecana*, 1827.

§ See Mantell's Geol. of S. E. of England.

the zoophytes which he possesses from the Gosau beds differ specifically from any which he knows as tertiary. I mention this in the hope that the identifications which have been made of Gosau and tertiary species may be re-examined with scrupulous care, for, if confirmed, they would be of the greatest theoretical interest.

This marked discordance in the organic remains of the two series is not confined to the testacea, but extends, so far as a careful comparison has yet been instituted, to all the other departments of the animal kingdom, and to the fossil plants. Dr. Agassiz, whose great work on fossil fish is now in progress of publication, has discovered no species of fish common to the secondary and tertiary rocks.

There appears, then, to be a greater chasm between the organic remains of the Eocene and Maestricht beds, than between the Eocene and Recent strata; for there are some living shells in the Eocene formations, while there are no Eocene fossils in the newest secondary group. It is not improbable that a longer interval of time may be indicated by this greater dissimilarity in fossil remains. In the third and fourth chapters I endeavoured to point out that we have no right to expect, even when we have investigated a greater extent of the earth's surface, that we shall be able to bring to light an unbroken chronological series of monuments from the remotest eras to the present; but, as we have already discovered a long succession of deposits of different ages, between the tertiary groups first known and the *recent* formations, so we may, perhaps, hereafter detect an equal, or even greater, series intermediate between the Maestricht and Eocene strata.

The different subdivisions of the cretaceous group (No. 1), extending from the chalk of Maestricht to the lower green-sand inclusive, may, perhaps, relate to a lapse of ages as immense as the united tertiary periods, of which the eventful history has been sketched in this work. Such a conjecture, at least, seems warranted, if we can form any estimate of the quantity of time, by comparing the amount of vicissitudes in animal life which has occurred during its lapse.

2. *The Wealden, or the Strata from the Weald Clay to the Purbeck Limestone inclusive.*—G, Table I., p. 454.

It will be seen by the Table I., p. 454, that in the South of England this group may be divided into three formations—the Weald clay, the Hastings sands, and the Purbeck beds, which are all characterized by the remains of freshwater animals; whereas the cretaceous strata which are superimposed upon the Wealden, in the south-east of England, contain fossils of marine species.*

* The term Wealden was suggested by Mr. Martin, and will be found of great convenience.

The position of these beds has been indicated in diagram Fig. 157., ante, p. 406, and the Map (Plate XV., ante, p. 404,) will show the superficial area occupied by them in Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and Hampshire. It must not be supposed, however, that they terminate at the points where they happen to be covered by the cretaceous system. The same group has been ascertained to extend from west to east (from Lulworth Cove to the boundary of the Lower Boulonnais), about 200 English miles; and from north-west to south-east (from Whitchurch to Beauvais), 220 miles; the depth or total thickness of the beds, where greatest, being about two thousand feet.* The general appearance of the clays and sands, and of the subordinate beds of limestone, grit, and shale, and of the imbedded shells, recalls so precisely that of many tertiary formations of freshwater origin, that it is only after having determined the species of organic remains that we recognise a discordance in character as great as might have been anticipated when strata above and below the chalk were compared.

The vegetable remains belong, some of them, to plants which appear to have held an intermediate place between the Equiseta and Palms, as the Clathraria discovered by Mr. Mantell; while others approach to arborescent ferns, the species being very peculiar, and not known in any other deposit, whether of higher or inferior antiquity.†

The shells of the Wealden are almost exclusively fluviatile; and, as is usual in assemblages of freshwater testacea, a few species only are found, while the individuals are very numerous, sometimes forming the principal component of entire beds of limestone. Shells of the *Cypris*, also, a freshwater animal, before mentioned as occurring in the lacustrine deposits of Auvergne, are profusely distributed throughout the Wealden. Of this genus several species have been discovered, named and figured by Dr. Fitton.‡ (See Figures.)

Fig. 196.

*Cypris spinigera*,
Fitton.

Fig. 197.

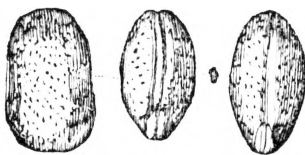
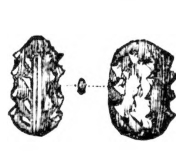
*Cypris Valdensis*, Fitton.
(*C. fuba*, Min. Con. 485.)

Fig. 198.

*Cypris tuberculata*,
Fitton.

Some fish, also, of forms resembling known fluviatile genera, have been met with; but the remains of reptiles present the most remarkable feature in this group. Some of these belong to turtles, such as the *Trionyx*, a

* Fitton's Geol. of Hastings, p. 58.

† Mantell, Geol. of S. E. of England, chap. xi.

‡ See Trans. of Geol. Soc., vol. iv., Second Series.

genus now occurring in freshwater in tropical regions: others are referable to the genus *Emys*. Of Saurian lizards there are at least five genera; the Crocodile, Plesiosaur, Megalosaur, Iguanodon, and Hylæosaur. The Iguanodon, of which the remains were first discovered by Mr. Mantell, was an herbivorous reptile, and was regarded by Cuvier as more extraordinary than any with which he was acquainted; for the teeth, though bearing a great analogy to the modern Iguanas which now frequent the tropical woods of America and the West Indies, exhibit many striking and important differences. It appears that they have been worn by mastication; whereas the existing herbivorous reptiles clip and gnaw off the vegetable productions on which they feed, but do not chew them. Their teeth, when worn, present an appearance of having been chipped off, and never, like the fossil teeth of the Iguanodon, have a flat ground surface, resembling the grinders of herbivorous mammalia.* From the large bones, found in great numbers near these teeth, and fairly presumed to belong to the same animal, it is computed that the entire length of this reptile could not have been less than seventy feet.

The bones of birds have been found in the Wealden; but in no part has any fragment of the skeleton of a mammiferous quadruped been obtained. With this exception, to which I shall presently revert, the strata of the Wealden present such characters as we might look for in the deposits of the deltas now forming at the mouths of large rivers in tropical climates.

The Wealden, as was before explained, is covered by the marine cretaceous system, and reposes upon another, which is, in like manner, a purely marine deposit; namely, the uppermost member of the Oolite, or group H, Table I., p. 454.

This intercalation of a great freshwater formation between two others of marine origin is a remarkable fact, and attests, in a striking manner, the great extent of former revolutions in the position of sea and land. In the those section where the junctions of the freshwater and cretaceous system is seen, the beds of the lower green-sand have been observed to repose conformably upon those of the subjacent Weald clay. There is no indication of disturbance: "To all appearance the change from the deposition of the freshwater remains to that of the marine shells may have been effected simply by a tranquil submersion of the land to a greater depth beneath the surface of the waters."†

At the point of contact of the *inferior* division of the Wealden or "Purbeck beds," with the more ancient marine system, a very curious phenomenon is observed: the freshwater calcareous strata repose, both in Portland and Purbeck, upon the oolitic limestone, called the Portland stone, which abounds with Ammonites, Trigoniæ, and other marine shells.

* Mantell, Geol. of S. E. of England, p. 277.

† Dr. Fitton, Geol. of Hastings, p. 23.

Between the two formations there intervenes “a layer, about a foot in thickness, of what appears to have been an ancient vegetable soil; it is of a dark brown colour, contains a large proportion of earthy lignite, and, like the modern soil on the surface of the island, many water-worn stones. This layer is called the ‘dirt bed’ by the quarrymen, and in, and upon it, are a great number of silicified trunks of coniferous trees, and plants allied to the recent *cycas* and *zamia*. Many of the stems of the trees, as well as the plants, are still erect, as if petrified while growing undisturbed in their native forest—the trees having their roots in the soil, and their trunks extending into the superincumbent strata of limestone.”*

Traces of this vegetable earth, occupying the same relative situation, have been observed by Dr. Fitton in the cliffs of the Boulonnois, on the opposite coast of France.† Dr. Buckland and Mr. De la Beche have also ascertained that many of the stumps of trees remain erect, with their roots attached to the black soil on which they grew, their upper part being imbedded in the limestone; from which they infer, “that the surface of the subjacent Portland stone was for some time dry land, and covered by a forest, and probably in a climate such as to admit the growth of the modern *Zamia* and *Cycas*.”‡

It seems a legitimate deduction from the data above explained, that the marine formations of an antecedent period (that of the oolite) had become land throughout a portion of the space now occupied by the South of England and the opposite coast of France; and that this land then sank down, with its forests, and became submerged beneath the waters of a great river, just as the region around Sindree in Cutch, subsided in 1819, and was permanently laid under water, being at one time occupied by the freshwater of the Indus.§ The country may then have continued to subside, until a thickness of one or two thousand feet of fluvial sediment had been gradually accumulated; and this deposit, or delta, by a continuation of the same depressing operations, may, in its turn, have become buried deep beneath the sea in which the chalk was formed.

I shall not enter farther into these speculations at present, but proceed to inquire how far the Wealden is connected by its fossil remains with the overlying or subjacent formations. First, we may ask whether there are any species of fossil animals or plants common to the freshwater group and to the oolitic system. I am aware of one example only, the *Megalosaurus*

* Mantell, Geol. of S. E. of England, p. 336.—See also papers by Mr. Webster, Dr. Buckland, and Mr. De la Beche, Geol. Trans., Second Series, vol. ii. Mr. Webster was, I believe, the first to notice the erect position of the stems.

† Geol. of Hastings. Geol. Proceedings, vol. i. p. 9.

‡ Proceedings of Geol. Soc., April, 1830.

§ See Vol. I. pp. 353, 384; and Vol. II. p. 155, and Plate V.

Bucklandi; for the teeth and bones of this great saurian occur in the Stonesfield oolite and the Hastings sands, the remains in both cases having been referred by Cuvier to the same species. There are also some *generic* forms both of reptiles and fish common to the Oolite and Wealden, and not yet discovered in the chalk. Vertebræ, for example, of the *Plesiosaurus* are not confined to the oolite and lias, but have been also found in the Wealden; and the *Lepidotus*, a genus of fish very characteristic of the Wealden, is unknown in the cretaceous group, while it is abundant in the oolitic series. On the other hand, the same *Iguanodon Mantelli*, which is so conspicuous a fossil in the Wealden, has recently been discovered near Maidstone in the overlying Kentish rag, a marine limestone of the lower green-sand. From this fact we may infer that some of the saurians which inhabited the country of that great river, which by its sediment produced the Wealden strata, continued to live when part of the country had become submerged beneath the sea. Thus, in our own times, we may suppose the bones of large alligators to be frequently entombed in recent freshwater strata in the delta of the Ganges. But if part of that delta should sink down so as to be covered by the sea, marine formations might begin to accumulate in the same space where freshwater beds had previously been formed; and yet the Ganges might still pour down its turbid waters in the same direction, and carry the carcasses of the same species of alligator to the sea, in which case their bones might be included in marine as well as in subjacent freshwater strata.

Near Beauvais, in France, there is a small valley of elevation and denudation, closely resembling in structure that of the Weald, and called the country of Bray, where the green-sand crops out from beneath the chalk, and where strata, for the most part like those of the Wealden, appear beneath the green-sand. One member of the series, a fine whitish sand, contains impressions of ferns, considered by M. Adolphe Brongniart as identical with *Lonchopteris Mantelli*, a plant found frequently in the Wealden. I examined part of the valley of Bray in company with M. Graves, in 1833, and I observed that the sand last mentioned, with its vegetable remains, was intercalated between two sets of marine strata, containing *trigoniæ*, and referred, by French geologists, to the lower green-sand. In the same country of Bray, and associated with the same formation, is a limestone resembling the Purbeck marble, and containing a *Paludina* which seems specifically identical with that of Purbeck.

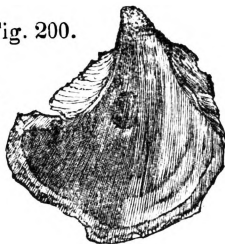
There are some few species, therefore, of the Wealden common on the one hand to the overlying cretaceous group, and on the other to the subjacent oolite; but the connexion hitherto established is so slight that the era of the freshwater deposit may have been separated by a wide interval of time from the periods when the animals either of the oolitic or cretaceous periods predominated.

3. Oolite, or Jura Limestone Formation.—H, Table I., p. 454.

The different subdivisions which have been made for the classification of the rocks of this group in England are enumerated in Table I., p. 454. It consists of limestone, clay, marl, and sand ; which, considered in the aggregate, retain the same lithological characters throughout a considerable part of England, France, and Germany. It is not to be expected that we should be able to follow the different members of the English series throughout Europe, as they vary greatly, both in mineral and organic characters, in their course throughout different parts of our own island ; but, as the fossils of the higher, middle, and lower parts of the series are not the same, it may be possible, by their aid, to establish subordinate groups of great utility.

Among the fossils known to have a wide range in Europe, and peculiar to the upper division, I may mention *Gryphæa virgula*, as occurring in France, near Oxford, and elsewhere (Fig. 199.), and *Ostrea deltoidea* (Fig. 200.), common in part of the upper Oolite or Kimmeridge clay, throughout England and the north of France, and found also in Scotland, at Brora.

Fig. 199. Fig. 200.

*Gryphæa virgula.**Ostrea deltoidea.*

The coral rag of England, and analogous zoophytic limestones of the oolitic period in different parts of Europe, bear a resemblance to the coralline formations now in progress in the seas of warmer latitudes.

Fig. 201.



Section of *Nerinæa hieroglyphica*.
Coral rag.

A member of the oolite of the Jura, corresponding to part of the English coral rag (H. 3. Table I. p. 454), has been called “Nerinæan limestone” (Calcaire à Nérinées) by M. Thirria ; *Nerinæa* being a genus of univalve shells, much resembling the *Cerithium* in external form. The annexed section (Fig. 201.), of one from the coral rag shows the curious form of the hollow part of each whorl, and also the perforation which passes up the middle of the columella.

A division of the oolite in the Alps, referred by most geologists to the coral rag, has been often named “Diceran limestone,” or “Calcaire à Dicerates,” from its containing abundantly a bivalve shell (Fig. 202., p. 446), of a genus allied to the *Chama*.

In the lithographic limestone of Solenhofen, belonging to one of the upper members of the series, a great variety of organic remains is found. Among these I have seen in the museum of Count Munster no less than seven *species* of flying lizards, or *Ptero-*

dactyls, six saurians, three tortoises, sixty species of fish, forty-six of crustacea, and twenty-six of insects. The number of testacea is compar-

Fig. 202.



Cast of *Dicerac arietina*. Coral rag.

tively small, as also of plants, which are all marine. Count Munster had determined 237 species of animal and vegetable remains from the Solenhofen slate when I saw his collection in 1833. The extreme fineness of the sediment has, in this instance, allowed impressions of some of the most delicate and soft parts of various animals to be preserved; as of the belemnite and several insects.

In the Stonesfield slate (see Table), the remains of reptiles have been found associated with marine shells, and with them the jaws of at least two species of small mammiferous quadrupeds of a genus allied to the Didelphys, or Opossum.* It is very remarkable, that these fossils afford the only exception yet known to the apparent absence of all terrestrial mammalia from the islands and continents which existed anteriorly to the Eocene period.

Among the characteristic shells of the oolite I may instance *Terebratula spinosa* (Fig. 203.), *Pholadomya fidicula* (Fig. 204.), and *Belemnites hastatus*, (Fig. 205.).

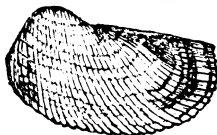
Fig. 203.



Terebratula spinosa.
Inferior Oolite.

a

Fig. 204.

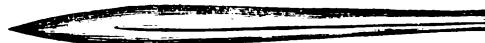


a. *Pholadomya fidicula*. Inferior Oolite.
b. Heart-shaped anterior termination of the same.

b



Fig. 205.



Belemnites hastatus.

4. *Lias*. I., Table I., p. 455.

The English provincial name of *Lias* has been very generally adopted for a formation of argillaceous limestone, marl, and clay, usually found in conformable stratification to the rocks of the oolite group before described. Some geologists regard the *lias* as the lowest member of the oolite group, several species of organic remains being common to it and to the inferior oolite. If we draw a line between these formations, the separation will be somewhat arbitrary, but may be, nevertheless, convenient; as both the oolite group and the *lias* will still comprehend a great thickness of strata,

* For figures of these, see Vol. I., pp. 154, 155.

characterized, when viewed on the great scale, by assemblages of distinct fossils. The lias retains a uniform mineralogical character throughout a great part of England, France, and Germany; and this circumstance may facilitate the attempt to ascertain the contemporaneous existence of a sufficiently numerous set of fossil plants and animals to enable us to determine the equivalent groups of distant countries.

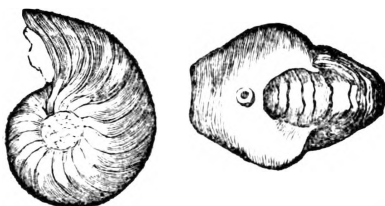
A principal member of this formation has been sometimes called on the Continent "Calcaire à gryphytes," or "Gryphyte limestone," from the great abundance of a species of shell of a genus allied to the oyster. (See Fig. 206.).

Fig. 206.



Gryphaea incurva, Sow.
Syn. *G. arcuata*, Lam.

Fig. 207.

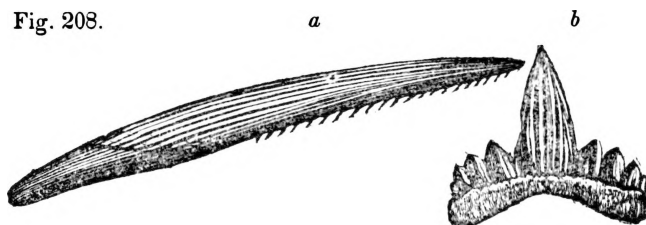


Nautilus truncatus, Lias.

The remains of reptiles, those of saurians in particular, are very common in the liassic rocks in several parts of England, especially of the genera *Ichthyosaurus*, *Plesiosaurus*, and *Crocodile*.

The fish are, for the most part, of the same genera as in the oolite. (See Figs. 208, 209.)

Fig. 208.



Hybodus reticulatus. Lias, Lyme Regis.

a. Part of the fin, commonly called *Ichthyodorulite*.

b. Tooth of the same.

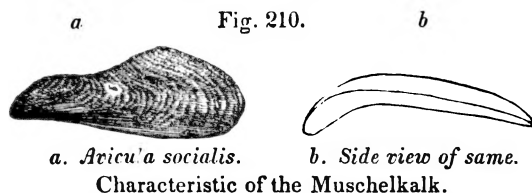
Fig. 209.



Acrodus nobilis, tooth; commonly called fossil Leach.
Lias, Lyme Regis, and Germany.

5. *New Red Sandstone group*, K., Tab. I., p. 455 (including the *Muschelkalk of the Germans*).

The deposits which are referable to the interval which separated the lias from the great coal formation may be divided into two principal groups: first, the New Red Sandstone; secondly, the Magnesian Limestone. The New Red sandstone of England, accompanied by beds of gypsum and rock salt, is almost entirely destitute of organic remains; but



the Muschelkalk of Germany, which is referable to the same period, and has no precise equivalent among the English strata, contains many fossils of species distinct from those of the lias, or subjacent magnesian limestone.

This calcareous formation (Muschelkalk) is interposed in Bavaria and Wurtemberg, between two others; the overlying "Keuper," or variegated marls, with which it alternates at the junction, and the red mottled sandstone ("bunter sandstein") on which it rests. The plants found by Count Munster in this last, and in the "Keuper," are so similar, as to induce that geologist to regard all the three groups thus connected as belonging to one period; and in confirmation of the same opinion, M. Agassiz finds the same species of fish to be common to the three groups.

6. *Magnesian Limestone (Zechstein of the Germans)*. L., Tab. I., p. 455.

This formation consists in England for the most part of a yellowish limestone, in which a small number only of organic remains are preserved, but these are referable to peculiar and characteristic species.

So also in the zechstein of the Germans, a limestone of this period, and in its accompanying copper slate, the same or very similar fossils occur. At Mansfeld, in Upper Saxony, for example, fish are found of the extinct genus *Palæothryssum*, only known in strata of this group. Dr. Agassiz informs me that he has not as yet been able to identify any species from Mansfeld with any one of those found in England, but the genus appears characteristic of the era under consideration.

7. *Carboniferous Group, comprising the Coal-measures, and the Mountain Limestone*. M., Tab. I., p. 456.

The rocks of this group consist of limestone, shale, sandstone, and conglomerate; interstratified with which are large beds of coal, a substance

now universally admitted to be of vegetable origin. Several hundred species of plants have been found in the shales and sandstones associated with the coal, and all are, with few exceptions, of species differing widely from those which mark the vegetation of other eras. Some remarks have been offered in the first book,* respecting the known geographical extent of the coal formation and the tropical character of its flora, and of the shells and corals of the carboniferous or mountain limestone.† I there adduced arguments for inferring that the lands in northern latitudes consisted, for the most part, at that remote era, of small islands; and mentioned the absence of large saurian remains, the insular character of the flora, and the deposition of the strata, as favouring that opinion.

But although the higher latitudes of the northern hemisphere probably formed at that time a great archipelago, they must have contained some islands of sufficient magnitude to allow of the existence of rivers, and estuaries, where freshwater strata were accumulated. A freshwater limestone has been discovered and described by Dr. Hibbert at Burdiehouse near Edinburgh, as lying beneath marine strata of the carboniferous group. Instead of containing fossil corallines or encrinites, like the mountain-limestone, the formation in question contains land plants in great abundance, and minute entomostraca supposed to be allied to the genus *Cypris* and several fish.‡

Mr. Hutton states that, in part of the coal-field of Northumberland and Durham, fossil shells of a species of *Unio* occur in considerable abundance in a shale containing plants of the carboniferous period, and overlying a bed of coal. The coal has been worked out from beneath the shells, which have been already proved to extend over an area five thousand feet square. The shelly stratum is about eighteen inches thick; and the animals have evidently died at various ages, the shells being of every size. This accumulation of bivalves of one species, and of this form, seems clearly to indicate the continuance on the spot of a body of fresh water, such as might be found in the estuary of a river.§

In the Shropshire coal-field near Bridgnorth, and in other places, Mr. Murchison has shown that the upper coal-measures contain a subordinate bed of limestone, which he has termed lacustrine, as a small species of shell, supposed to be a *Planorbis*, is plentifully imbedded in it.||

The fossils of the mountain limestone, above alluded to, are marine, and contain, among other genera of shells not discovered in newer deposits, the *Orthocera* (see Fig. 211., p. 450), a chambered univalve, sometimes many feet in length.

* Vol. I. pp. 133, 134, 135.

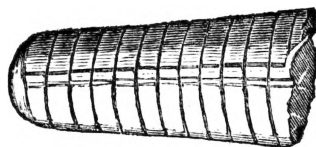
† Vol. I. p. 109.

‡ Hibbert, Trans. R. S. Edinb., vol. xiii., and L. Horner, Edinb. New Phil. Journ. April 1836.

§ Fossil Flora, by Lindley and Hutton, No. 10.

|| Proceedings of Geol. Soc., No. 38. p. 119.

Fig. 211.



Orthoceras laterale, Phillips.
Mountain limestone.

Fig. 212.

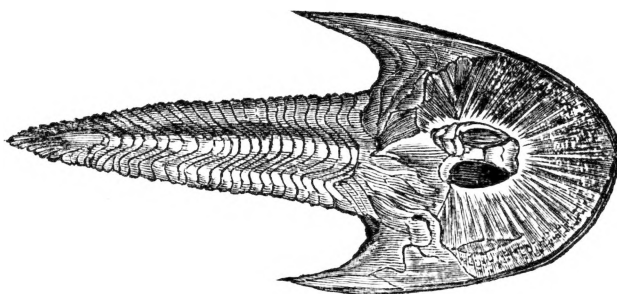


O. giganteum, Sow.
Section showing the siphuncle.

8. *Old Red Sandstone.* N., Table I., p. 456.

Beneath the coal-series in the northern part of Fifeshire in Scotland, and the southern half of Forfarshire, a formation occurs of great thickness, composed of red marl, conglomerate, red and white sandstone, and shales of various colours, for the most part devoid of organic remains. In some of the shales, however, impressions of plants, apparently marine, have been met with; and in the flaggy sandstones containing a slight admixture of carbonate of lime, the scales and other remains of fish are not unfrequent. They belong to a genus named by Dr. Agassiz "*Cephalaspis*," or "*buckler-headed*," from the extraordinary shield which covers the head. (See Fig. 213.). This peculiar form of fish, which is quite unknown

Fig. 213.



Cephalaspis Lyellii, Agass. Length, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

This figure is from a specimen now in my collection, which I procured at Glamis in Forfarshire. The species, which Dr. Agassiz has named after me, will be described in his work on Fossil Fish.

in the coal-strata, seems characteristic of the old red sandstone generally; for it is found in Herefordshire and other counties of England and Wales, where the old red sandstone is largely developed. All the animal and vegetable remains hitherto discovered in this series are distinct from those of the overlying coal, or subjacent transition strata.

9. *Transition, or Greywacké Formations.* O. & P., Table I., p. 456.

Continental and English authors have not always been agreed where the line of separation should be drawn between the secondary and transi-

tion formations. Some of them, for example, have included the carboniferous group in the secondary, others in the transition system. But in England the old red sandstone has been generally considered as the lowest member of the secondary series.

The name of transition was first given by Werner to certain sedimentary deposits consisting, in the Hartz and many parts of Germany, of arenaceous and brecciated rocks which alternate with argillaceous schist, and are sometimes associated with coralline and shelly limestones. These were supposed to have been the earliest formed strata when the ocean first became habitable by aquatic beings. Although the principal members of this group, where it is largely developed, are evidently of mechanical origin, they often alternate with beds of quartz and argillaceous schist, not distinguishable mineralogically from crystalline rocks classed by Werner as primitive. Hence, as was before stated, the term transition was adopted to express the theory that, at this period, the causes which had given rise to crystalline formations were still in action; while those which produced stratified sedimentary rocks, including organic remains, were also beginning to operate.

The characteristic group called in German "Grauwacke," an old miner's term, is an aggregate of small fragments of quartz, flinty slate (or Lydian stone), and argillaceous schist, cemented together by argillaceous matter. But far too much importance has been attached to this kind of rock, as if it were peculiar to a certain epoch in the earth's history, whereas it is only an accidental variety of argillaceous sandstone, probably in some cases altered by heat. There are parts of England and Sweden where fossiliferous strata more ancient than the old red sandstone are largely developed, and yet where no rocks answering mineralogically to the Greywacké of the Germans are discoverable.

The first great step towards a general table of superposition of the British fossiliferous groups below the old red sandstone, each distinguished by certain mineral characters and organic remains, has recently been made by Mr. Murchison, and his arrangement has been adopted in Table I., p. 456.

Mr. Murchison has had an opportunity of tracing the succession of deposits in a regular descending series, from the old red sandstone with which they are in part covered, to the subjacent and unconformable greywacké rocks of South Wales. As far as his examination has hitherto proceeded, all the species of zoophytes and shells differ from those of the carboniferous limestone; while the fossils of his four great subdivisions are distinct from each other.*

He has proposed the term "Silurian," as a general name for this whole system of rocks, derived from "Silures," the principal tribe of Celts or

* Proceedings of Geol. Soc. London, No. 34. 1834.

ancient Britons, who occupied part of Wales and the bordering counties of England, where these ancient fossiliferous strata are most distinctly exhibited. The Ludlow rocks and the Wenlock limestone may be classed as the Upper Silurian group, being the deposits which are immediately below the old red sandstone; while the Caradoc sandstones and Llandeilo flags form the Lower Silurian group. Below all these there are other fossiliferous rocks which, in Wales, are unconformable to the Silurian strata.

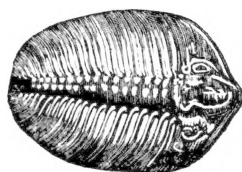
Among the fossils of the Silurian formations, zoophytes and crinoidea are the most numerous; and some of the limestones, which are in great part composed of them, agree in their general character with those now in progress in seas where stone corals are abundant. The Trilobite (see Figs. 214, 215.), a singular crustaceous animal, of which no species is

Fig. 214.



Calymene Blumenbachii,
Brongniart, Pl. 1. fig. 1. commonly
called "Dudley trilobite."
Upper Silurian rocks.

Fig. 215.



Asaphus Buchii.
Brongniart, Pl. 2. fig. 2. A.
Lower Silurian.

known in formations newer than the mountain limestone, is also characteristic of the rocks of this period; so also the Orthocera, a chambered univalve, found also in the carboniferous limestone (see Fig. 211., ante, p. 450), but hitherto in no newer deposit. On the other hand, some of the shells belong to recent genera, as the *Terebratula*, of which there is a great variety. The only vertebrated remains hitherto found are a few bones of fishes. The shells and zoophytes of these formations have been studied in Germany by Count Munster, Professor Goldfuss, and M. Steininger. In Nassau, M. Stifft has endeavoured to classify the different subdivisions of the same series chiefly by reference to their mineralogical characters. M. Hisinger also, who has recently published a geological map of the south of Sweden, as well as Professor Wahlenberg and the late M. Dalman, have described and figured many fossil productions from these strata in Sweden.

With this "Silurian" group I shall conclude; for it does not appear that any antecedent periods can yet be established on the evidence of a distinct assemblage of fossil remains. Traces of organization do undoubtedly occur in rocks of still higher antiquity, for some of which Professor Sedgwick has proposed the name of "Cambrian;" but they can scarcely be referred to a distinct geological period, until we have obtained more

data for determining the specific characters of a considerable number of fossils.

The annexed table will explain the order of superposition of the successive groups of fossiliferous strata hitherto established in Europe; it should be remembered, however, that it is in a small part of western Europe only that almost all this series of monuments has been discovered.

TABLE I.

Showing the Order of Superposition, or Chronological Succession, of the principal European Groups of Sedimentary and Fossiliferous Strata.

This Table is also referred to in the Glossary.

Periods and Groups.	Names of the principal Members and Mineral Nature of the Formation, in Countries where it has been most studied.		Some of the Localities where the Formation occurs.	
I. RECENT PERIOD.	The deposits of this period are for the most part concealed under existing lakes and seas.			
	A.	Consolidated sandy and gravelly beds(<i>a</i>), travertine limestones(<i>b</i>), calcareous sandstones with broken shells(<i>c</i>), coral limestone, consisting of corals, shells, &c (<i>d</i>), compact limestone(<i>e</i>).	<i>a.</i> Delta of the Rhone. <i>b.</i> Tivoli, and other parts of Italy. <i>c.</i> Shore of Island of Guadaloupe. <i>d.</i> Coral reefs in Pacific, &c. <i>e.</i> Bermudas.	
II. TERTIARY PERIOD.	B. Newer Pliocene.	MARINE. Limestone, sands, clays, sandstones, conglomerates, marls, with gypsum; containing <i>marine</i> fossils(<i>a</i>).	FRESHWATER. Sands, clays, sandstones, lignites, &c.; containing <i>land</i> and <i>freshwater</i> fossils(<i>b</i>).	<i>a.</i> Sicily, Ischia. <i>b.</i> Colle in Tuscany.
	C. Older Pliocene.	<i>Subapennine marl</i> , <i>Subapennine yellow sand</i> , <i>English "crag,"</i> and other deposits, as in B., containing <i>marine</i> fossils(<i>a</i>).	Similar deposits to B.; containing <i>land</i> and <i>freshwater</i> fossils (<i>b</i>).	<i>a.</i> Subapennine formations, Perpignan, Nice, Norfolk and Suffolk. <i>b.</i> Near Sienna, &c.
	D. Miocene.	<i>Faluns of the Loire</i> , and other deposits varying in mineral composition, as those in B. and C., containing <i>marine</i> fossils(<i>a</i>).	Similar deposits to B. and C.; containing <i>land</i> and <i>freshwater</i> fossils (<i>b</i>).	<i>a.</i> Touraine, Bordeaux, Valley of Bormida, Superga near Turin, Basin of Vienna. <i>b.</i> Saucats, twelve miles south of Bordeaux.
	E. Eocene.	<i>Calcaire grossiere</i> (<i>a</i>) <i>London clay</i> , sands, sandstones, &c., with <i>marine</i> fossils(<i>b</i>).	<i>Calcaire siliceux</i> —sandstones and conglomerates, red marl, green and white marls, limestone, gypseous marls—with <i>land</i> and <i>freshwater</i> fossils(<i>c</i>).	<i>a.</i> Paris basin. <i>b.</i> Paris, London, and Hampshire basins, Isle of Wight. <i>c.</i> Paris basin, Isle of Wight, Auvergne, Velay, Cantal.

TABLE I.—*continued.*

Periods and Groups.	Names of the principal Members and Mineral Nature of the Formation, in Countries where it has been most studied.	Some of the Localities where the Formation occurs.
F. Cretaceous Group.	1. <i>Maestricht Beds</i> .—Soft yellowish-white limestone with siliceous masses, resembling chalk (marine).	St. Peter's Mount, Maestricht. Ciply, near Mons. North and South Downs, and parts of the intervening Weald of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. Yorkshire; North of Ireland. Beauvais, France.
	2. <i>Chalk with flints</i> (marine).	
	3. <i>Chalk without flints</i> (marine).	
	4. <i>Upper green sand</i> (marine).—Marly stone, and sand with green particles; layers of calcareous sandstone.	
	5. <i>Gault</i> (marine).—Blue clay, with numerous fossils, passing into calcareous marl in the lower parts.	
	6. <i>Lower green sand</i> (marine).—Gray, yellowish, and greenish sands, ferruginous sands and sandstones, clays, cherts, and siliceous limestones.	
G. Wealden Group.	1. <i>Weald clay</i> (freshwater).—Clay for the most part without intermixture of calcareous matter, sometimes including thin beds of sand and shelly limestone.	1, 2. Extensively developed in the central parts of Kent, Surrey and Sussex. 3. Isle of Purbeck, in Dorsetshire.
	2. <i>Hastings sands</i> (freshwater).—Gray, yellow, and reddish-brown sands, sandstones, clays, calcareous grits passing into limestone	
	3. <i>Purbeck beds</i> (freshwater).—Various kinds of limestones and marls.	
H. Oolite, or Jura Limestone Group.	1. <i>Portland beds</i> (marine).—Coarse shelly limestone, fine-grained white limestone, compact limestone—all more or less of an oolitic structure; beds of cherts.	Isle of Portland, Tisbury in Wiltshire, Aylesbury.
	2. <i>Kimmeridge clay</i> (marine).—Blue and grayish-yellow slaty clay, containing gypsum, bituminous slate (Kimmeridge coal.)	Near Kimmeridge on coast of Dorsetshire—Sunning Well, near Oxford.
	3. <i>Coral rag</i> (marine).—Calcareous shelly freestones, largely oolitic; coarse limestone, full of corals; yellow sands; calcareous siliceous grits.	Headington, near Oxford—Farringdon, in Berkshire—Calne and Steeple Ashton, in Wiltshire—Somersetshire.
	4. <i>Oxford clay</i> (marine).—Dark blue tenacious clay, with septaria, bituminous shale, sandy limestone (Kelloway rock), iron pyrites, gypsum.	New Malton, in Yorkshire—Lincolnshire—Cambridgeshire—Huntingdonshire, and midland counties—abundantly near Oxford—Somersetshire—Dorsetshire.
	5. <i>Cornbrash</i> (marine).—Gray or bluish rubbly limestone, separated by layers of clay.	Malmsbury, Atford, Wraxall, Chippenham.

TABLE I.—*continued.*

Periods and Groups.	Names of the principal Members and Mineral Nature of the Formation, in Countries where it has been most studied.	Some of the Localities where the Formation occurs.
III. SECONDARY PERIOD— <i>continued.</i>	H. Oolite, or Jura Limestone Group— <i>continued.</i>	
	6. <i>Forest marble</i> (marine).—Calcareo-siliceous sand and gritstone; thin fissile beds of limestone, with clay partings; coarse shelly limestone.	Whichwood Forest, Oxfordshire—Frome, south-east of Bath.
	7. <i>Great oolite</i> (marine).—White and yellow oolitic calcareous freestone, coarse shelly limestone, layers of clay. Oolitic limestone, with remains of land animals, birds, amphibia, plants, sea-shells(<i>a</i>).	Bath—Burford in Oxfordshire—Bradford in Wiltshire. <i>a.</i> Stonesfield near Woodstock, Oxfordshire.
	8. <i>Fuller's earth clay</i> (marine).—Clay containing in some places fuller's earth.	Near Bath.
	9. <i>Inferior oolite</i> (marine).—Soft freestone, sand with calcareous concretions.	Cotteswold Hills—Dundry Hill, near Bristol.
	Limestones of various qualities, clays, sands, and sandstone, containing the same fossils as those occurring in the series of the oolitic group of England, constitute the main body of the Jura chain of mountains, and cover vast tracts of country in Germany.	
	I. Lias Group.	
	<i>Lias</i> (marine).—Shale and sandy marlstone. Blue, white, and yellow earthy limestone, usually in thin beds, interstratified with clay, often slaty and bituminous.	Lyme Regis in Dorsetshire, and in many parts of Somersetshire—Yorkshire—in Sutherlandshire, the Hebrides, and North of Ireland. In France, as at Metz, and to a considerable extent in Germany, as in the Swabian Jura.
	K. New Red Sandstone Group.	
	1. <i>Keuper, or variegated marls</i> .—Red, gray, green, blue, and white marls, sandstones, conglomerates, and shells, containing gypsum and rock-salt.	Neighbourhood of Vosges mountains, and many parts of Wurtemberg and Westphalia, Nuremberg.
Magnesian Limestone Group.	2. <i>Muschelkalk</i> (marine).—Gray, blue, and blackish limestone, with alternating clay and marl, and with siliceous layers, and nodules.	Extensively developed in Germany and France. Hitherto no beds in England have been identified with the formation.
	3. <i>Variegated (Bunter) sandstone</i> .—Red, white, blue, and green siliceo-argillaceous sandstone, often micaceous and containing gypsum and rock-salt.	Nottinghamshire—Yorkshire. Stuttgart.
	L. 1. <i>Magnesian limestone (a)</i> (marine).—Marl-slate, shelly limestone, variegated marls, yellow magnesian limestone. <i>Zechstein of Germany (b)</i> —limestone—marl-slate, containing copper ore, and impressions of fish.	<i>a.</i> Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland. <i>b.</i> Mansfield in Thuringia.
	2. <i>Red conglomerate</i> .—Sandstones, conglomerates, sands, and marls.	Neighbourhood of Exeter.

TABLE I.—*continued.*

Periods and Groups.	Names of the principal Members and Mineral Nature of the Formation, in Countries where it has been most studied.	Some of the Localities where the Formation occurs.
III. SECONDARY PERIOD.— <i>continued.</i>	M. Carboniferous Group.	
	1. <i>Coal measures</i> (freshwater and marine).—Sandstones, grits, conglomerates, clays, with ironstone, shales, and limestone, interstratified with beds of coal. 2. <i>Mountain limestone</i> (marine).—Gray, compact, and crystalline limestone, abounding in lead ore in North of England, and alternating with coal measures in Scotland.	Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Somersetshire, South Wales, Valleys of the Forth and Clyde. District of Liege, Westphalia, Silesia, Bohemia, &c. Mendip Hills, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland, Lanarkshire, Linlithgowshire, many parts of Ireland. North-west of Germany. Belgium, North of France.
IV. TRANSITION PERIOD.	N. Old red sandstone Group.	Extensively developed in Shropshire and Herefordshire, Brecknockshire, Dumfries-shire, Forfarshire. Silesia, Bohemia.
	O. Silurian Group.	
	1. <i>Ludlow rocks</i> (marine).—Argillaceous limestone, sandy shale.	Ludlow Castle, Shropshire; Aymestry and Woolhope, Herefordshire.
	2. <i>Wenlock limestone</i> (marine).—Coralline limestone and argillaceous shale, with nodules of earthy limestone.	Wenlock Edge, Shropshire, Dudley, Worcestershire.
	3. <i>Caradoc sandstones</i> (marine).—Shelly limestone and micaceous sandstone, quartzose grits, and sandy limestones.	Horderly, Shropshire; and May Hill, Gloucestershire. East flank of Wrekin and Caer Caradoc, Shropshire.
	4. <i>Llandeilo flags</i> (marine).—Calcareous flags, sandstone and schist.	Llandrindod, near Builth, Radnorshire. Llandeilo, Caermarthenshire.
	P.	Fossiliferous greywacké, and rocks older than the Silurian, but in which no distinct assemblage of organic remains have as yet been specifically determined. Professor Sedgwick has proposed the name of "Cambrian" for these formations.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANALOGY OF THE OLDER FOSSILIFEROUS TO THE TERTIARY STRATA.

That land as well as sea existed at each successive period—Some former continents placed where it is now sea—Secondary freshwater deposits, why rare (p. 460.)—Persistency of mineral composition, why apparently greatest in older rocks—Supposed universality of red marl formations—Secondary rocks, why more consolidated—why more fractured and disturbed (p. 463.) Secondary volcanic rocks of many different ages.

IN the last chapter I stated that no detailed account of the older fossiliferous formations would be attempted in this work, and that I should confine myself almost exclusively to the inquiry how far the rules of interpretation previously adopted for the tertiary groups might be applied to the phenomena of more ancient strata. To this point the following remarks are chiefly directed:—

Position of former continents.—The existence of land as well as sea, at every geological period, is attested by the remains of terrestrial plants imbedded in the deposits of all ages, even the most remote. We find fluviatile shells not unfrequently in the secondary strata, and here and there some freshwater formations; but the latter are less common than in the tertiary series. For this fact the reader's mind has been prepared, by the views advanced in the third chapter respecting the different circumstances under which the secondary and tertiary strata appear to have originated. The secondary, it was suggested, may have been accumulated in an ocean like the Pacific, where coralline and shelly limestones are forming; or in a basin like the bed of the western Atlantic, which may have received, for ages, the turbid waters of great rivers, such as the Amazon and Orinoco, each draining a considerable extent of continent. The *tertiary* deposits, on the other hand, very probably accumulated during the growth of a continent, by successive emergence of new lands, and the uniting together of islands. During such changes, inland seas and lakes would be caused, and their basins afterwards filled up with sediment, and then raised above the level of the waters.

That the greater part of the space now occupied by the European continent was sea when some of the secondary rocks were produced, must be inferred from the wide areas over which several of the marine groups are diffused; but we need not suppose that the quantity of land was less in those remote ages, but merely that its position was very different.

It has been shown that, immediately below the chalk and green-sand, a fluviatile formation, called the Wealden, occurs, which has been ascertained to extend from west to east about 200 English miles, and from

north-west to south-east about 220 miles, the depth or total thickness of the beds, where greatest, being about 2000 feet.* These phenomena clearly indicate that there was a constant supply in that region, for a long period, of a considerable body of fresh water, such as might be supposed to have drained a continent, or a large island, containing within it a lofty chain of mountains. Dr. Fitton, in speaking of these appearances, recalls to our recollection that the delta of the newly discovered Quorra, or Niger, in Africa, stretches into the interior for more than 170 miles, and occupies, it is supposed, a space of more than 300 miles along the coast; thus forming a surface of more than 25,000 square miles, or equal to about one half of England.†

If asked where the continent was placed from the ruins of which the Wealden strata were derived, we might be almost tempted to speculate on the former existence of the Atlantis of Plato as true in geology, although fabulous as an historical event. We know that the present European lands have come into existence almost entirely since the deposition of the chalk (see Map, Plate II. Vol. I. p. 141); and the same period may have sufficed for the disappearance of a continent of equal magnitude situated farther to the west.

But among the numerous fossils of the ancient delta of the Wealden no remains of mammalia have been detected; whereas we should naturally expect, on examining the deposits recently formed at the mouths of the Quorra, Indus, or Ganges, to find, not only the bones of birds and of amphibious and land reptiles, but also those of the hippopotamus, and other mammalia which frequent the banks of rivers. Mr. Mantell seems to have demonstrated,‡ that the remains of the animals and plants found fossil in the Wealden have, with the exception of the testacea and other aquatic tribes, been transported for a considerable distance, the stems of the plants being, for the most part, torn and intermingled with pebbles of quartz, slate, and jasper; while the bones of lizards, turtles, and fish, are detached from the skeleton, and more or less broken and rolled. But admitting that these fossils were drifted for many a league, we might fairly expect that, at least, some fragments of mammiferous bones would have reached the delta.

It is certainly a startling proposition to suppose, that a continent covered with vegetation, which had its forests of palms and tree-ferns, and its plants allied to the *Dracæna* and *Cycas*, which was inhabited by large saurians, and by birds, was, nevertheless, entirely devoid of land quadrupeds. If the proofs were confined to the Wealden, we might hesitate to lay much stress on mere negative evidence, since extensive deposits of

* Fitton's *Geology of Hastings*, p. 58.

† *Ibid*, p. 58, who cites *Lander's Travels*.

‡ *Geol. of S. E. of England*, p. 232.

the Eocene period, such as the London clay, have as yet yielded no mammiferous fossils. But when we find the same general absence of mammalia in strata of the Oolitic and Liassic eras, we can hardly refuse to admit that the highest order of quadrupeds was very feebly represented in those ages, when the small *Didelphys* of Stonesfield was entombed. Some of the bones, indeed, collected by Dr. Buckland from the Oolitic series, have been pronounced by Cuvier to be cetaceous; but that naturalist has himself remarked how closely the vertebræ of the larger reptiles resemble those of certain dolphins; so that it is highly desirable that the fossils alluded to should be re-examined with great care.*

So far, then, as our present inquiries enable us to judge, there are strong indications that, during the periods of the Wealden, the Oolite and Lias, there was a large development of the reptilia, at the expense, as it were, both of the cetaceous and terrestrial mammalia.

It may be well, then, to inquire whether this difference in the state of animal life in the northern hemisphere, at these remote periods, is irreconcilable with the notion of the constancy and uniformity of the laws which govern the changes of the organic world. Would the almost entire suppression of one important class of vertebrated animals, and the larger development of another, if fully established on farther investigation, imply that there are no fixed rules according to which the form, structure, and attributes of animals are accommodated to the endless vicissitudes of the earth's surface? Or are the rules, if any, made to endure for a time only, new ones being substituted at each successive period? Or is it conceivable that the distinct zoological characters of certain secondary groups, as compared to others of the tertiary epoch, may depend on laws as uniform as those which, from one century to another, appear to determine the growth of certain tribes of plants and animals in the arctic, and of others in tropical regions?

In Australia, New Zealand, and many other parts of the southern hemisphere, where the indigenous land quadrupeds are comparatively few and of small dimensions, the reptiles do not predominate in number or size. The deposits formed at the mouth of an Australian river, within the tropics, might contain the bones of only a few small marsupial animals, which, like those of Stonesfield, might hereafter be discovered with difficulty by geologists; but there would, at the same time, be no megalosauri and other fossil remains, showing that large saurians were plentiful on the land and in the waters when mammalia were scarce.

No precise analogy, therefore, can here be found to the state of the animal kingdom supposed to have prevailed during the secondary periods, when a high temperature pervaded European latitudes. But it may be useful to consider whether any of the anomalies now caused by climate

* Mantell, *Geol. of S. E. of England*, p. 232; and see Vol. I. p. 151, of this work.

in the relative number and importance of different classes of the vertebrata may not in some degree illustrate this topic. In the Arctic regions, for example, reptiles are small, and sometimes wholly wanting, where birds, large land quadrupeds, and cetacea abound. We meet with bears, wolves, foxes, musk oxen, and deer, walruses, seals, whales, and narwals, in regions of ice and snow, where the smallest snakes, efts, and frogs are rarely if ever seen.

On what grand laws in the animal physiology this remarkable phenomenon depends, cannot, in the present state of science, be explained; nor could we predict whether any opposite condition of the atmosphere in respect to heat, moisture, and other circumstances, would bring about a state of animal life which might be called the converse of that above described; a state of things in which large mammalia might abound, and reptiles disappear. We ought, however, to recollect, that a mean annual temperature like that now experienced at the equator, co-existing with the unequal days and nights of European latitudes, and with a distinct distribution of sea and land, would imply a climate to which we have now no parallel. Consequently, the type of animal and vegetable existence required for such a climate might deviate as widely from that now established in any part of the globe, as do the Flora and Fauna of our tropical differ from those of our arctic regions.

Secondary freshwater deposits, why rare.—If there were extensive tracts of land in the secondary period, we may presume that there were lakes also; yet I am not aware of any pure lacustrine formations interstratified with rocks older than the chalk. Perhaps their general absence may be accounted for by the adoption of the theoretical views above set forth; for if the present ocean coincides for the most part with the site of the ancient continent, the places occupied by lakes must have been submerged. It should also be recollected, that the area covered by lakes, at any one time, is very insignificant in proportion to the ocean; and, therefore, we may expect that, after the earth's surface has undergone considerable revolutions in its physical geography, the lacustrine strata will be concealed, for the most part, under superimposed marine deposits.

Persistency of mineral character.—In the same manner as it is rare and difficult to find ancient lacustrine strata, so also we can scarcely expect to discover newer marine groups preserving the same lithological characters continuously throughout wide areas. The chalk now seen stretching for thousands of miles over different parts of Europe has become visible to us by the effect, not of one, but of many distinct series of movements. Time has been required, and a succession of geological periods, to raise it above the waves in so many regions; and if calcareous rocks of the Eocene or Miocene periods have been formed, preserving a homogeneous mineral composition throughout equally extensive regions, it may require convulsions as numerous as all those which have occurred

since the origin of the chalk to bring them up within the sphere of human observation. Hence the rocks of more modern periods may appear of partial extent, as compared to those of remoter eras, not because there was any original difference of circumstances throughout the globe when they were formed, but because there has not been sufficient time for the development of a great series of subterranean volcanic operations since their origin.

At the same time, the reader should be warned not to place implicit reliance on the alleged persistency of the same mineral characters in secondary rocks.* When it was first ascertained that an order of succession could be traced in the principal groups of strata above enumerated, names were given to each, derived from the mineral composition of the rocks in those parts of Germany, England, or France, where they happened to be first studied. When it was afterwards acknowledged that the zoological and phytological characters of the same formations were far more persistent than their mineral peculiarities, the older names were still retained, instead of being exchanged for others founded on more constant and essential characters. The student was given to understand that the terms chalk, green-sand, oolite, red marl, coal, and others, were to be taken in a liberal and extended sense; that chalk was not always a cretaceous rock, but in some places, as on the northern flanks of the Pyrenees, and in Catalonia, a saliferous red marl. Green-sand, it was said, was rarely green, and frequently not arenaceous, but represented in parts of the south of Europe by a hard dolomitic limestone. In like manner, it was declared that the oolitic texture was rather an exception to the general rule in rocks of the oolitic period, and that no particle of carbonaceous matter could often be detected in the true *coal* formation of many districts where it attains great thickness. It must be obvious to every one, that inconvenience and erroneous prepossessions could hardly fail to arise from such a nomenclature; and accordingly a fallacious mode of reasoning has been widely propagated, chiefly by the influence of a language so singularly inappropriate.

After the admission that the identity or discordance of mineral character was by no means a sure test of agreement or disagreement in the age of rocks, it was still thought, by many geologists, that if they found a rock at the antipodes agreeing precisely in mineral composition with another well known in Europe, they could fairly presume that both are of the same age, *until the contrary could be shown*.

Now, it is usually difficult or impossible to combat such an assumption on geological grounds, so long as we are imperfectly acquainted with the geology of a distant country, inasmuch as there are often no organic remains in the foreign stratum; and even if these abound, and are speci-

* See some remarks on this subject, Vol. I., p. 95.

fically different from the fossils of the supposed European equivalent, it may be objected that we cannot expect the same species to have inhabited very distant quarters of the globe at the same time.

Supposed universality of red marl.—I shall select a remarkable example of the erroneous mode of generalizing now alluded to. A group of red marl and sandstone, sometimes containing salt and gypsum, is found in England interposed between the lias and the carboniferous strata. For this reason, other red marls and sandstones, associated some of them with salt, and others with gypsum, and occurring not only in different parts of Europe, but in Peru, India, the salt deserts of Asia, those of Africa, in a word, in every quarter of the globe, have been referred to one and the same period. The burden of proof is not supposed to rest with those who insist on the identity of age of all these groups; so that it is in vain to urge as an objection the improbability of the hypothesis which would imply that all the moving waters on the globe were once simultaneously charged with sediment of a red colour.

The absurdity of pretending to identify, in age, all the red sandstones and marls in question, has at length been sufficiently exposed, by the discovery that, even in Europe, they belong decidedly to many different epochs. We have already ascertained, that the red sandstone and red marl, with which the rock-salt of Cardona is associated, may be referred to the period of our chalk and green-sand. I was led to this opinion when I visited Cardona in 1830, and before I was aware that M. Dufrénoy had arrived at the same conclusions.* I have pointed out that in Auvergne there are red marls and variegated sandstones, which are undistinguishable in mineral composition from the new red sandstone of English geologists, yet which were deposited in the Eocene period: and, lastly, the gypseous red marl of Aix, in Provence, formerly supposed to be a marine secondary group, is now acknowledged to be a tertiary freshwater formation.

Secondary rocks, why more consolidated.—One of the points where the analogy between the secondary and tertiary formations has been supposed to fail, is the greater degree of solidity observable in the secondary series. Undoubtedly the older rocks, in general, are more stony than the newer; and most of the tertiary strata are more loose and incoherent in their texture than the secondary. Many exceptions, however, may be pointed out, especially in those calcareous and siliceous deposits which have been precipitated in great part from the waters of mineral springs, and have been originally compact. Of this description are a large proportion of the Parisian Eocene rocks, which are more stony than most of the English secondary groups.

But strata in general have evidently been consolidated *subsequently to*

* Ann. des Sci. Nat., Avril, 1831, p. 449.

their deposition by a slow lapidifying process. Thus loose sand and gravel are bound together by waters holding carbonate and oxide of iron, carbonate of lime, silica, and other ingredients in solution. These waters percolate slowly the earth's crust in different regions, and often remove gradually the component elements of fossil organic bodies, substituting other substances in their place. It seems, moreover, that the draining off of the waters during the elevation of land may often cause the *setting* of particular mixtures, in the same manner as mortar hardens when desiccated, or as the recent soft marl of Lake Superior becomes highly indurated when exposed to the air.* The conversion of clay into shale, and of sand into sandstone, may, in many cases, be attributed to simple pressure, produced by the weight of superincumbent strata, or by the upward heaving of subjacent masses during earthquakes. Heat is another cause of a more compact and crystalline texture, which will be considered when I speak of the strata termed "primary." All the changes produced by these various means require *time* for their completion; and this may explain, in a satisfactory manner, why the older rocks are most consolidated, without entitling us to resort to any hypothesis respecting an *original* distinctness in the degree of lapidification of the secondary strata.

Secondary, why more disturbed.—As the older formations are generally more stony, so also they are more fractured, curved, elevated, and displaced, than the newer. Are we, then, to infer, with some geologists, that the disturbing forces were more energetic in remoter ages? No conclusion can be more unsound; for as the moving power acts from below, the newer strata cannot be deranged without the subjacent rocks participating in the movement; while we have evidence that the older have been frequently shattered, raised, and depressed, again and again, before the newer rocks were formed. It is evident that if the disturbing power of the subterranean causes be exerted with *uniform* intensity in each succeeding period, the quantity of convulsion undergone by different groups of strata will generally be great in proportion to their antiquity. But exceptions will occur, owing to the partial operation of the volcanic forces at particular periods; so that we sometimes find tertiary strata more elevated and disturbed, in particular countries, than the secondary rocks in others.

Some of the enormous faults and complicated dislocations of the ancient strata may probably have arisen from the continued repetition of earthquakes in the same place, and sometimes from two distinct series of convulsions, which have forced the same masses in different, and even opposite, directions; sometimes by vertical, at others by horizontal, movements.

Secondary volcanic rocks of different ages.—The association of volcanic

* Vol. I., p. 217.

rocks with different secondary strata is such as to prove that there were igneous eruptions at many distinct periods, as also that they were confined during each epoch, as now, to limited areas. Thus, for example, igneous rocks contemporaneous with the carboniferous strata abound in some countries, but are wanting in others. So it is evident that the bottom of the sea, on which the oolite and its contemporary deposits were thrown down, was, for the most part, free from submarine eruptions; but at some points, as in the Hebrides, it seems that the same ocean was the theatre of volcanic action. It was before remarked,* that, as the ancient eruptions occurred in succession, sufficient time usually intervening between them to allow of the accumulation of many subaqueous strata, so also should we infer that subterranean movements, which are another portion of the volcanic phenomena, occurred separately and in succession.

CHAPTER XXV.

RELATIVE ANTIQUITY OF MOUNTAIN-CHAINS.

Theory of M. Elie de Beaumont—His opinions controverted—His method of proving that different chains were raised at distinct periods, and that the rise of others was contemporaneous, not conclusive—His doctrine of the parallelism of contemporaneous lines of elevation—Objections (p. 468.)—How far anticlinal lines formed at the same period are parallel—Difficulties in the way of determining the relative age of mountains.

THAT the different parts of our continents have been elevated, in succession, to their present height above the level of the sea, is an opinion which has been gradually gaining ground with the progress of science; but no one before M. Elie de Beaumont had the merit even of attempting to collect together the recorded facts which bear on this subject, and to reduce them to one systematic whole. The above-mentioned geologist was eminently qualified for the task, as one who had laboured industriously in the field of original observation, and who combined an extensive knowledge of facts with an ardent love of generalization.

But, as I cannot admit the accuracy of an important part of his method of reasoning on this topic, and as his principal conclusions appear to me

* Book I. chap. v.

very uncertain, I must explain the reasons of my dissent, having first given a brief summary of the most prominent features of his theory.

1st. M. de Beaumont supposes, "that in the history of the earth there have been long periods of comparative repose, during which the deposition of sedimentary matter has gone on in regular continuity; and there have also been short periods of paroxysmal violence, during which that continuity was broken.

"2dly. At each of these periods of violence or 'revolution' in the state of the earth's surface, a great number of mountain-chains have been formed suddenly.

"3dly. All the chains thrown up by a particular revolution have one uniform direction, being parallel to each other within a few degrees of the compass, even when situated in remote regions; but the chains thrown up at different periods have, for the most part, different directions.

"4thly. Each 'revolution,' or, as it is sometimes termed, 'frightful convulsion,' has fallen in with the date of another geological phenomenon; namely, 'the passage from one independent sedimentary formation to another,' characterized by a considerable difference in 'organic types.'

"5thly. There has been a recurrence of these paroxysmal movements from the remotest geological periods; and they may still be reproduced, and the repose in which we live may hereafter be broken by the sudden upthrow of another system of parallel chains of mountains.

"6thly. We may presume that one of these revolutions has occurred within the historical era, when the Andes were upheaved to their present height; for that chain is the best defined and least obliterated feature observable in the present exterior configuration of the globe, and was probably the last elevated.

"7thly. The instantaneous upheaving from the ocean of great mountain masses must cause a violent agitation in the waters; and the rise of the Andes may, perhaps, have produced that transient deluge which is noticed among the traditions of so many nations.

"Lastly. The successive revolutions above mentioned cannot be referred to ordinary volcanic forces, but may depend on the secular refrigeration of the heated interior of our planet."*

I need not enter here into an examination of all these topics, as the discussion of several of them has been in some degree anticipated in former chapters. Respecting the alternation of periods of general repose and disorder, I have before suggested that geological phenomena indicate merely that each region of the globe has in succession been a great theatre of subterranean convulsions, as some districts are now, while others remain

* *Ann. des Sci. Nat.*, Septembre, Novembre, et Décembre, 1829. *Revue Française*, No. 15. May, 1830. The last edition by M. de B. is in *De La Beche's Manual*, 3d. edit.; and *D'Aubuisson, Traité de Géognosie*, tom. iii. p. 282., 1835.

at rest. Before we can reasonably attribute extraordinary energy to any known cause, we must be sure that its usual force would be inadequate, though exerted for indefinite ages, to produce the effects required.

The geologist, therefore, who assumes that continents and mountain-chains have been heaved up suddenly by paroxysmal violence, may be considered as pledging himself to the opinion that the accumulated effects of ordinary volcanic forces could never in any series of years produce appearances such as we witness in the earth's crust. Time and the progress of science can alone decide whether such an assumption is warranted, or whether, on the contrary, it does not spring from two sources of prejudice :—first, the difficulty of conceiving the aggregate results of a great number of minor convulsions ; secondly, the habit of viewing geological phenomena without any desire to explain them as the effects of moderate forces, such as we know to act, instead of that intense degree of energy, the occasional development of which, however possible, is entirely conjectural.

The speculations of M. de Beaumont concerning the “secular refrigeration” of the internal nucleus of the globe, considered as a cause of the instantaneous rise of mountain-chains, appears to me obscure, and is mainly founded on that part of the doctrine of central heat which has been controverted in the first volume.*

In regard to the connexion of the rise of mountain-chains with revolutions equally sudden in the animate world, I have endeavoured to show in the third book, that changes in physical geography, which are unceasingly in progress, are among the causes which contribute, in the course of ages, to the extermination of certain species of animals and plants ; but the influence of these causes is slow, and, for the most part, indirect, and has no analogy with those sudden catastrophes which are introduced into the theory now under review. An explanation of the probable cause of the abrupt transitions from one set of strata to another, containing distinct organic remains, has been given at length in the third and fourth chapters of this book.†

When the protrusion of the Andes from beneath the sea is proposed as a possible cause of the historical deluge, we naturally inquire, what proofs there are of that chain having started up at once within the last 4000 or 5000 years from a great depth of sea ; for it is necessary that a large body of water should be displaced, in order that a diluvial wave, capable of inundating a previously existing continent, should be raised. If it were reasonable to refer deluges to what have been called paroxysmal elevations, it would surely be a fairer speculation to point to a line of shoals or reefs, consisting of shattered and dislocated rocks, and surrounded on

* Book II. chapters xviii. and xix.

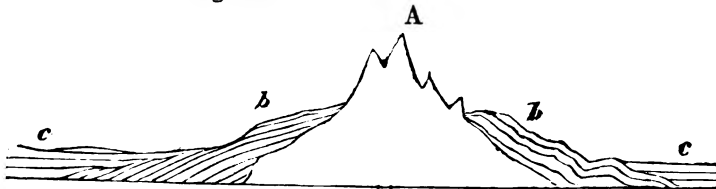
† See particularly from p. 210 to p. 216, of Vol. II.

all sides by an unfathomable ocean, than to select a mountain-chain as the site of the upthrow ; for the rapid conversion of the bed of a deep sea into a shoal would evidently cause a much greater displacement of water than the rise of a large shoal into a mountain-chain.

Without dilating further on these subjects, I shall now endeavour to analyze the proofs by which the successive elevation of different chains, and the supposed parallelism of lines of contemporaneous elevation, are supported.

M. de Beaumont's proofs that different chains were raised at different epochs.—"We observe," says M. Elie de Beaumont, "along nearly all the mountain-chains, when we attentively examine them, that the most recent rocks extend horizontally up to the foot of such chains, as we should expect would be the case if they were deposited in seas or lakes, of which these mountains have partly formed the shores ; whilst the other sedimentary beds, tilted up, and more or less contorted, on the flanks of the mountains, rise in certain points even to their highest crests."* There are, therefore, in and adjacent to each chain, two classes of sedimentary rocks, the ancient or inclined beds, and the newer or horizontal. It is evident that the first appearance of the chain itself was an event "intermediate between the period when the beds now upraised were deposited and that when the strata were produced horizontally at its feet."

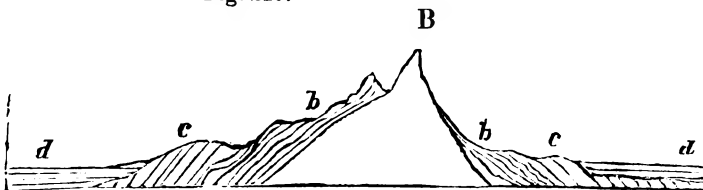
Fig. 216.



Thus the chain A assumed its present position after the deposition of the strata *b*, which have undergone great movements, and before the deposition of the group *c*, in which the strata have not suffered derangement.

If we then discover another chain B, in which we find not only the formation *b*, but the group *c* also, disturbed and thrown on its edges, we

Fig. 217.



* Phil. Mag. and Annals, No. 58., New Series, p. 242.

may infer that the latter chain is of subsequent date to A ; for B must have been elevated *after* the deposition of *c*, and before that of the group *d* ; whereas A had originated *before* the strata *c* were formed.

In order to ascertain whether other mountain ranges are of contemporaneous date with A and B, or are referable to *distinct* periods, we have only to inquire whether the geological phenomena are identical ; namely, whether the inclined and undisturbed sets of strata in each correspond to those in the types above mentioned.

Objections to M. de Beaumont's theory.—Now all this reasoning is perfectly correct, so long as the periods of the deposition of the particular local groups of strata *b* and *c* are not confounded with the periods during which the animals and plants found fossil in *b* and *c* may have flourished, and provided also that due latitude is given to the term contemporaneous ; for this term must be understood to allude, not to a moment of time, but to the interval, whether brief or protracted, which elapsed between two events, namely, between the accumulation of the inclined and that of the horizontal strata.

But, unfortunately, no attempt seems to have been made to avoid this manifest source of confusion, and hence the very terms of each proposition are equivocal ; and the length of some of the intervals is so vast, that to affirm that all the chains raised in such intervals were *contemporaneous*, is an abuse of language.

In order to illustrate this argument, I shall select the Pyrenees as an example. This range of mountains, says M. de Beaumont, rose suddenly (*à un seul jet*[†]) to its present elevation at a certain epoch in the earth's history, namely, between the deposition of the chalk and that of the tertiary formations ; for the chalk is seen in vertical, curved, and distorted beds on the flanks of the chain, while the tertiary formations rest upon them in horizontal strata at its base.

The only proof offered of the extreme suddenness of the convulsion is the shortness of the time which intervened between the formation of the chalk and that of the tertiary strata.[‡]

Now the beds called chalk on the flanks of the Pyrenees differ widely in mineral composition from the white chalk with flints of England and France ; but as they contain for the most part the same species of fossil shells, I grant that they may on that evidence be referred to the cretaceous system.[‡] On the other hand, the horizontal tertiary strata at the western end of the Pyrenees, near Bayonne, are certainly of the Miocene period.

* In the last edition of M. de B.'s system (see note, ante, p. 466), he only speaks of the convulsion which raised the Pyrenees, as "one of the most violent which the land of Europe ever experienced."

† Phil. Mag. and Annals, No. 58., New Series, p. 243.

‡ The fossils which I collected in company with Captain S. E. Cook, R. N., from the newest secondary beds on the flanks of the Pyrenees, near Bayonne, were examined by M. Deshayes, and found identical with species of the chalk near Paris.

The reader will find, when he reflects on these data, that we can only infer that the great movement took place after the cretaceous period had commenced, but we cannot assume that it occurred after the *close* of that period. So also we may say, that the Pyrenees rose before the close of the Miocene epoch, but not that the event happened before its *commencement*. We cannot permit M. de Beaumont to exclude the whole of either of these periods (the Cretaceous and Miocene) from the possible duration of that interval during all or any part of which the elevation may have taken place.

The upheaving of the Pyrenees, therefore, may have been going on before the animals of the chalk period ceased to exist, or when the Maestricht beds were in progress, or during the indefinite ages which may have elapsed between the extinction of the Maestricht animals and the introduction of the Eocene tribes, or during the Eocene epoch, or between that and the Miocene, or at the commencement of the Miocene epoch. Or the rise may have been going on throughout one, or several, or all of these periods.

It would be a purely gratuitous assumption to say that the chalk strata *c*, Fig. 217., ante, p. 467, were the last which were deposited during the cretaceous period, or that, when they were upheaved, all or nearly all the species of animals and plants which are now found fossil in them were suddenly exterminated; yet, unless this can be affirmed, we cannot say that the chain B was not upheaved during the cretaceous period. Consequently, another range of mountains (A, Fig. 216., ante, p. 467), at the base of which cretaceous rocks, *c*, may lie in horizontal stratification, may have been elevated during the same period; because, in this case, the particular group *c* may have been formed long after the animals and plants which are characteristic of them, in a fossil state, began to flourish, and during those antecedent ages the chain A may have risen.

The Newer Pliocene strata in Sicily have been raised to the height of nearly 3000 feet in some places, with great derangement; yet the testacea and zoophytes inclosed in these still exist, or nine-tenths of them at least, in the Mediterranean. The same period still continues, if we speak of periods in the same extended sense in which they are understood by geologists, and by M. de Beaumont, in the memoir now before us. So the chalk in the Pyrenees may have been raised to the height of many thousand feet, when the animals found fossil in the upheaved strata still continued to inhabit the sea.

In like manner the sea may have been inhabited by Miocene testacea for ages before the deposition of those particular Miocene strata which occur at the foot of the Pyrenees.

To illustrate the grave objections above advanced, which go to affect the whole of De Beaumont's reasoning, let us suppose, that in some country three styles of architecture had prevailed in succession, each for a period of one thousand years; first the Greek, then the Roman, and

then the Gothic ; and that a tremendous earthquake was known to have occurred in the same district during one of the three periods,—a convulsion of such violence as to have levelled to the ground all the buildings then standing. If an antiquary, desirous of discovering the date of the catastrophe, should first arrive at a city where several Greek temples were lying in ruins and half engulfed in the earth, while many Gothic edifices were standing uninjured, could he determine on these data the era of the shock ? Could he even exclude any one of the three periods and decide that it must have happened during one of the other two ? Certainly not. He could merely affirm that it happened at some period after the introduction of the Greek style, and before the Gothic had fallen into disuse. Should he pretend to define the date of the convulsion with greater precision, and decide that the earthquake must have occurred after the Greek and before the Gothic period, that is to say, when the Roman style was in use, the fallacy in his reasoning would be too palpable to escape detection for a moment.

Yet such is the nature of the erroneous induction which I am now exposing. For as, in the example above proposed, the erection of a particular edifice is perfectly distinct from the period of architecture in which it may have been raised, so is the deposition of chalk, or any other set of strata, from the geological epochs characterized by certain fossils to which they may belong.

It is superfluous to enter into any farther analysis of this theory, because the force of the whole argument depends on the accuracy of the data by which the contemporaneous or non-contemporaneous date of the elevation of two independent chains can be demonstrated. In every case, this evidence, as stated by M. de Beaumont, is equivocal, because he has not included in the possible interval of time between the deposition of the deranged and the horizontal formations part of the periods to which each of those classes of formations are referable. By the insufficiency, then, of the above proofs, the doctrine of the parallelism of lines of contemporaneous elevation is destroyed ; because all the geological facts may be true, and yet the conclusion that certain chains were or were not simultaneously upraised is by no means a legitimate consequence.

As the hypothesis of parallelism, however, has acquired some popularity, I may remark, that it appears, as stated by the author, to be in some degree at variance with itself. When certain European chains were assumed to have been raised at the same time, on the data already impugned, it was found that several of these contemporaneous chains had a parallel direction. Hence it was immediately inferred to be a general law in geological dynamics that the chains upheaved at the same time are parallel. For example, it was said that the Pyrenees and northern Apennines have a direction about W. N. W. and E. S. E. ; to this line the Alleghenies, in North America, conform, as also the Ghauts of Malabar, and certain chains in Egypt, Syria, northern Africa, and other countries ;

and from this mere conformity in direction it was presumed that all these mountain-ranges were thrown up simultaneously.*

To select another example, the principal chain of the Alps, differing in age and direction from the Pyrenees, is parallel to the Sierra Morena, the Balkan, the chain of Mount Atlas, the central chain of the Caucasus, and the Himalaya. All these ridges, therefore, are assumed to have been heaved up by the same paroxysmal convulsion. The Western Alps, on the other hand, rose at a still earlier period, when the parallel chains of Kiöl, in Scandinavia, certain chains in Morocco, and the littoral Cordillera of Brazil, were formed !

Not only do these speculations refer to mountains never yet touched, as M. Boué remarks, by the hammer of the geologist, but they proceed on the supposition, that in these distant chains the geological and geographical axis always coincide. Now we know that in Europe the *strike*† of the beds is not always parallel to the direction of the chain. As an exception, we may instance the Hartz mountains, where Von Dechen‡ states that the direction or *strike* of the strata of slate and greywacké is sometimes from E. to W., and frequently N. E. to S. W. ; the geographical direction of the mountain-chain being decidedly from E. S. E., to W. N. W.

In addition to these considerations, the important admission is made by M. de Beaumont himself, that the elevating forces, whose activity must be referred to *different* epochs, have sometimes acted in Europe in *parallel* lines. "It is worthy of remark," he says, "that the directions of three systems of mountains,—namely, first, that of the Pilas and the Côte d'Or ; secondly, that of the Pyrenees ; and thirdly, that of the islands of Corsica and Sardinia,—are respectively parallel to three other systems, namely, first, that of Westmoreland and the Hunsdruck ; secondly, that of the Ballons (or Vosges) and the hills of the Bocage, in Calvados ; and thirdly, the system of the north of England. The corresponding directions only differ in a few degrees, and the two series have succeeded each other in the same order, leading to the supposition, that there has been a *kind of periodical recurrence* of the same, or nearly the same, directions of elevations."§

Here, then, we have three systems of mountains, A, B, C, which were formed at successive epochs, and have each a different direction ; and we

* In regard to the Alleghenies, see De Beaumont, 1833. French Trans. of De la Beche's Manual, p. 657. But in fact this chain runs from N. E. to S. W.

† The term "strike" has been recently adopted by some of our most eminent geologists from the German "streich," to signify what our miners call the "line of bearing" of the strata. Such a term was much wanted ; and, as we often speak of *striking off* in a given direction, the expression seems sufficiently consistent with analogy in our language.

‡ Trans. of De la Beche's Geol. Manual, p. 41.

§ Phil. Mag. and Annals, No. 58., New Series, pp. 255, 256.

have three other systems, D, E, F, which, although they are assumed to have the same strike as the series first mentioned (D corresponding with A, E with B, and F with C), are nevertheless declared to have been formed at different periods. On what principle, then, is the age of an Indian or transatlantic chain referred to one of these European lines rather than to another?—why is the age of the Alleghenies, or the Ghauts of Malabar, determined by their parallelism to B rather than to E, to the Pyrenees rather than to the Ballons of the Vosges?*

Modern volcanic lines not parallel.—The analogy of volcanic operations in our own times would lead us to suppose that the lines of convulsion, at former epochs, were far from being uniform in direction; for that the trains of *active* volcanos are not parallel, every one is aware who has studied Von Buch's masterly survey of the general range of volcanic lines over the globe;† while the elevations and subsidences caused by modern earthquakes, although they may sometimes run in parallel lines within limited districts, have not been observed to have a common direction in distant and independent theatres of volcanic action.

I doubt not that in many regions, yet only within a limited range of country, the ridges, troughs, and fissures caused by modern earthquakes, are, to a certain extent, parallel to each other; and such appears to have been the case in many districts at former eras. The anticlinal lines of the Weald valley, before alluded to, and the Isle of Wight, may, in this manner, have been contemporaneous; that is to say, both may have been formed in some part of the Eocene period,—an hypothesis which does not involve the theory of their having been due to a paroxysmal convulsion at the same moment of that vast period. It should be observed, that, as some trains of burning volcanos are parallel to each other, so at all periods some independent lines of elevation may be parallel *accidentally*; not in obedience to any known law of parallelism, but, on the contrary, as exceptions to the general rule.

The speculations of M. de Beaumont will, I trust, be useful, in inducing geologists to inquire how far the uniformity in the direction of the beds, in a region which has been agitated at any particular period, may extend; but, in the present state of our science, I cherish no sanguine expectations of fixing a chronological succession of epochs of elevation of different mountain-chains, or of making more than a loose approximation to such a result. The difficulty depends chiefly on the broken and interrupted

* The substance of the last objection has been anticipated by M. Boué (Journ. of Geol., tom. iii. p. 338). I shall not repeat here minor points and facts, enumerated, in a former edition, as disputed by several geologists, because they are of no importance if the base of the theory is unfounded. See Mr. Conybeare's remarks, Phil. Mag. and Journ. of Sci., No. 2., Third Series, p. 118. Studer, Bulletin de la Soc. Géol. de France, ii. p. 68.

† Physical. Besch. der Canarischen Inseln. Berlin, 1825.

nature of the series of sedimentary formations hitherto brought to light, which appears so imperfect that we can very seldom be sure that, between the groups now classed as consecutive, the memorials of some great interval of time may not be wanting. Another great source of ambiguity arises from the small progress which we have yet made in identifying strata in countries somewhat distant from each other.

There may be instances, perhaps, where the same set of strata, preserving throughout a perfect identity of mineral character, may be traced continuously from the flanks of one independent mountain-chain to the base of another, the beds being vertical or inclined in one chain, and horizontal in the other. We might then decide with confidence, according to the method proposed by M. de Beaumont, on the relative periods at which these chains had undergone disturbance: and from one point thus securely established, we might proceed to another, until we had determined the eras of many neighbouring lines of convulsion.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON THE ROCKS COMMONLY CALLED "PRIMARY."

Relation of rocks called "Primary" to volcanic and sedimentary formations—Unstratified rocks called "Plutonic"—Granite veins—Their various forms and mineral composition—Proofs of their igneous origin—Granites of the same character produced at successive eras (p. 478.)—Some of these newer than certain fossiliferous strata—Volcanic, trapean, and plutonic rocks.

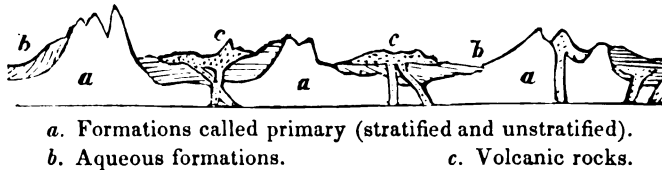
I SHALL now treat of the class of rocks usually termed "primary," a name which, as I shall afterwards show, is not always applicable, since the formations so designated sometimes belong to different epochs, and are not, in every case, more ancient than the fossiliferous strata. In general, however, this division of rocks may justly be regarded as of higher antiquity than the secondary and transition groups above described; and they may, therefore, with propriety be spoken of in these concluding chapters, as I have hitherto proceeded in my retrospective survey from the newer to the more ancient geological monuments.

In order to explain the relation which I conceive the rocks termed "primary" to bear to the tertiary, secondary, and transition formations, I shall resume that general view of the component parts of the earth's crust

of which I gave a slight sketch in the preliminary division of the subject in the second chapter.*

It was there stated that sedimentary formations, containing organic remains, occupy a large part of the surface of our continents; but that here and there volcanic rocks occur, covering, alternating with, or breaking through, the sedimentary deposits; so that there are two orders of mineral masses formed at the surface which have obviously a distinct origin,—the aqueous and the volcanic.

Fig. 218.



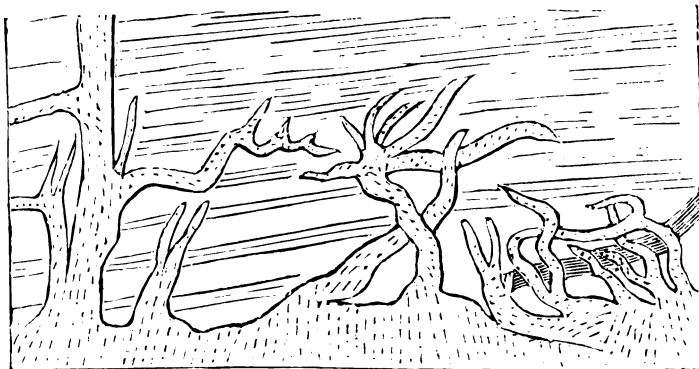
Besides these, however, there is another class, which cannot be assimilated precisely to either of the preceding, and which is often seen underlying the sedimentary, or breaking up to the surface in the central parts of mountain-chains, constituting some of the highest lands, and, at the same time, passing down and forming the inferior parts of the crust of the earth. This class, usually termed "primary," is divisible into two groups,—the stratified and the unstratified. The stratified consists of the rocks called gneiss, mica-schist, argillaceous-schist (or clay-slate), hornblende-schist, primary limestone, and some others. The unstratified, or Plutonic, is composed in great measure of granite, and rocks closely allied to granite. Both these groups agree in having, for the most part, a highly crystalline texture, and in not containing organic remains.

Plutonic rocks.—The unstratified crystalline rocks have been very commonly called Plutonic, from the opinion that they were formed by igneous action at great depths; whereas the volcanic, although they also have risen up from below, have cooled from a melted state upon or near to the surface. Granite, porphyry, and other rocks of the same family, often occur in large amorphous masses, from which small veins and dikes are sent off, which traverse the stratified rocks called "primary," precisely in the manner in which lava is seen in some places to penetrate the secondary strata.

Granite veins.—We find also one set of granite veins intersecting another, and granitiform porphyries intruding themselves into granite, in a manner analogous to that of the volcanic dikes of Etna and Vesuvius, where they cut and shift each other, or pass through alternating beds of lava and tuff.

* See ante, p. 192.

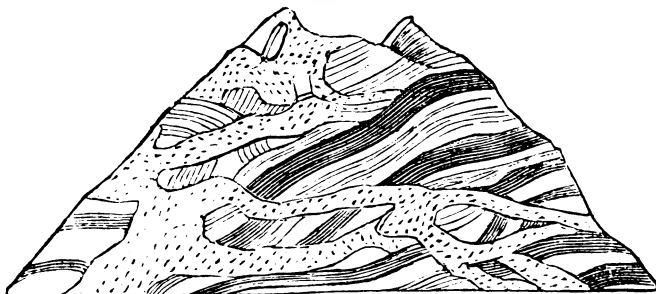
Fig. 219.

*Granite veins traversing stratified rocks.*

The annexed diagram will explain to the reader the manner in which these granite veins often branch off from the principal mass. Those on the right-hand side, and in the middle, are taken from Dr. MacCulloch's representation of veins passing through the gneiss at Cape Wrath, in Scotland.* The veins on the left of the same diagram are described, by Captain Basil Hall, as traversing the argillaceous schist of the Table-Mountain at the Cape of Good Hope.†

I subjoin another sketch from Dr. MacCulloch's interesting representations of the granite veins in Scotland, and in which the contrast of colour between the vein and some of the dark varieties of hornblende-schist associated with the gneiss renders the phenomena more conspicuous.

Fig. 220.

*Granite veins traversing gneiss at Cape Wrath, in Scotland.*

The following sketch of a group of granite veins in Cornwall is given by Messieurs Von Oeynhausen and Von Dechen.‡ The main body of

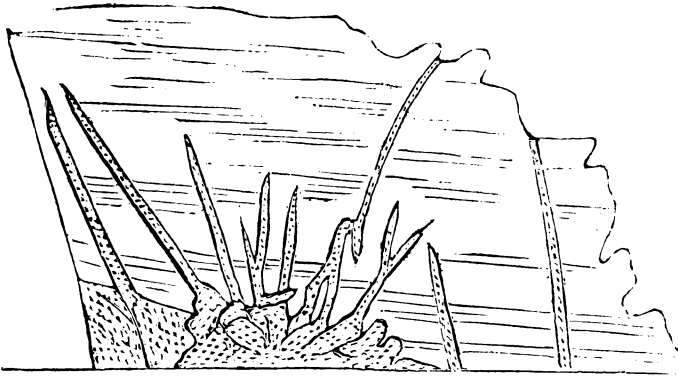
* Western Islands, plate 31.

† Account of the Structure of Table-Mountain, &c. Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin., vol. vii.

‡ Phil. Mag. and Annals, No. 27, New Series, March, 1829.

the granite here is of a porphyritic appearance, with large crystals of felspar ; but in the veins it is fine-grained, and without these large crystals. The general height of the veins is from sixteen to twenty feet, but some are much higher.

Fig. 221.



Granite veins passing through hornblende slate, Carnsilver Cove, Cornwall.

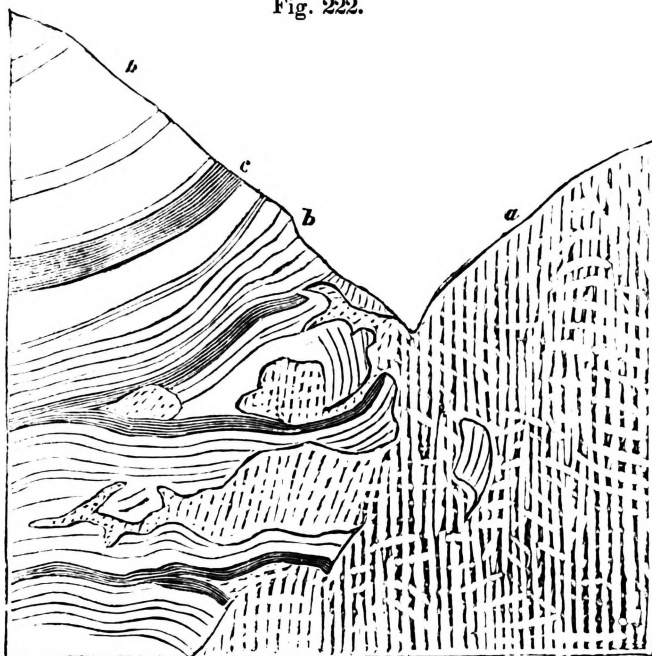
The vein-granite of Cornwall very generally assumes a finer grain, and frequently undergoes a change in mineral composition, as is very commonly observed in other countries. Thus, according to Professor Sedgwick, the main body of the Cornish granite is an aggregate of mica, quartz, and felspar ; but the veins are sometimes without mica, being a granular aggregate of quartz and felspar. In other varieties quartz prevails to the almost entire exclusion both of felspar and mica ; in others, the mica and quartz both disappear, and the vein is simply composed of white granular felspar.*

Changes are sometimes caused in the intersected strata very analogous to those which the contact of a fused mass might be supposed to produce.

The annexed diagram, from a sketch of Dr. MacCulloch, represents the junction of the granite of Glen Tilt, in Perthshire, with a mass of stratified limestone and schist. The granite, in this locality, often sends forth so many veins as to reticulate the limestone and schist, the veins diminishing towards their termination to the thickness of a leaf of paper or a thread. In some places fragments of granite appear entangled, as it were, in the limestone, and are not visibly connected with any larger mass ; while sometimes, on the other hand, a lump of the limestone is found in the midst of the granite. The ordinary colour of the limestone of Glen Tilt is lead blue, and its texture large-grained and highly crystalline ; but where it approximates to the granite, particularly where it is penetrated by the smaller veins, the crystalline texture disappears, and it

* On Geol. of Cornwall, Trans. of Cambridge Soc., vol. i. p. 124.

Fig. 222.

*Junction of granite and limestone in Glen Tilt.*

a. Granite.

b. Limestone.

c. Blue argillaceous schist.

assumes an appearance exactly resembling that of hornstone. The associated argillaceous schist often passes into hornblende slate, where it approaches very near to the granite.*

The conversion of the limestone in these and many other instances into a siliceous rock, effervescing slowly with acids, would be difficult of explanation, were it not ascertained that such limestones are always impure, containing grains of quartz, mica, or felspar disseminated through them. The elements of these minerals, when the rock has been subjected to great heat, may have been fused, and so spread more uniformly through the whole mass.

In the plutonic, as in the volcanic rocks, there is every gradation from a tortuous vein to the most regular form of a dike, such as I have described intersecting the tufts and lavas of Vesuvius and Etna. In these dikes of granite, which may be seen, among other places, on the southern flank of Mount Battoch, one of the Grampians, the opposite walls sometimes preserve an exact parallelism for a considerable distance. It is not uncommon for one set of granite veins to intersect another; and sometimes there are three sets, as in the environs of Heidelberg, where the granite on the banks

* MacCulloch, Geol. Trans., vol. iii. p. 259.

of the river Necker is seen to consist of three varieties, differing in colour, grain, and various peculiarities of mineral composition. One of these, which is evidently the second in age, is seen to cut through an older granite; and another, still newer, traverses both the second and the first. These phenomena were pointed out to me by Professor Leonhard at Heidelberg.

In Shetland there are two kinds of granite. One of these, composed of hornblende, mica, felspar, and quartz, is of a dark colour, and is seen underlying gneiss. The other is a red granite, which penetrates the dark variety every where in veins.*

Granites of different ages.—It was formerly supposed that granite was the oldest of rocks, the mineral product of a particular period or state of the earth, formed long antecedently to the introduction of organic beings into our planet. But it is now ascertained that this rock has been produced again and again, at successive eras, with the same characters, penetrating the stratified rocks in different regions, but not always associated with strata of the same age. Nor are organic remains always entirely wanting in the formations invaded by granite, although they are usually absent. Many well authenticated exceptions to the rule are now established, on the authority of numerous observers, amongst the earliest of whom we may cite Von Buch, who discovered in Norway a mass of granite overlying an ancient secondary limestone, containing orthocerata and other shells and zoophytes.†

A considerable mass of granite in the isle of Sky is described by Dr. MacCulloch as incumbent on limestone and shale, which are of the age of the English lias.‡ The limestone, which, at a greater distance from the granite, contains shells, exhibits no traces of them near its junction, where it has been converted into a pure crystalline marble.§

This granite of Sky was at first termed "Syenite," by which name some authors have denominated the more modern granites; but they have entirely failed in their attempt to establish a distinction between granites and syenites on geological grounds. Syenite has been defined to be a triple compound of felspar, quartz, and hornblende; but the oldest granitic-form rocks are very commonly composed of these ingredients only. In his later publications Dr. MacCulloch has, with great propriety, I think, called the pleutonic rock of Sky a granite.||

In different parts of the Alps a comparatively modern granite is seen penetrating through secondary strata, which contain belemnites, and other

* MacCulloch, *Syst. of Geol.*, vol. i. p. 58.

† *Travels through Norway and Lapland*, p. 45. London 1813.

‡ See Murchison, *Geol. Trans.*, Second Series, vol. ii., part. ii., pp. 311—321.

§ *Western Islands*, vol. i. p. 330.

|| *Syst. of Geol.*, vol. i. p. 150.

fossils, and are supposed to be referable to the age of the English lias. According to the observations of MM. Elie de Beaumont and Hugi, masses of this granite are sometimes found partially overlying the secondary beds, and altering them in a manner analogous to the changes superinduced upon sedimentary deposits in contact with rocks of igneous origin.* (See Fig. 225., post.)

In such examples we can merely affirm, that the granite is newer than a secondary formation containing belemnites; but we can form no conjecture when it originated, not even whether it be of secondary or tertiary date. It is not to be inferred that a granite is usually of about the same age as the group of strata into which it has intruded itself; for in that case we should be inclined to assume, rashly, that the granite found penetrating a more modern rock, such as the lias, for example, was much newer than that which is found to invade greywacké. The contrary may often be true; for the plutonic rock which was last in a melted state may not anywhere have been forced up so near to the surface as to traverse the newer groups, but may be confined exclusively to the older sedimentary formations.

"In a deep series of strata," says Dr. MacCulloch, "the superior or distant portions may have been but slightly disturbed, or have entirely escaped disturbance, by a granite which has not emitted its veins far beyond its immediate boundary. However certain, therefore, it may be, that any mass of granite is posterior to the gneiss, the micaceous schist, or the argillaceous schists, which it traverses, or into which it intrudes, we are unable to prove that it is not also posterior to the secondary strata that lie above them."†

There can be little doubt, however, that some granites are more ancient than any of our regular series which we identify by organic remains; because there are rounded pebbles of granite, as well as gneiss, in the conglomerates of very ancient fossiliferous groups.

Distinction between volcanic and plutonic rocks—Trap.—When geologists first began to examine attentively the structure of the northern parts of Europe, they were almost entirely ignorant of the phenomena of existing volcanos: and when they met with basalt and other rocks composed chiefly of augite, hornblende, and felspar, which are now admitted by all to have been once in a state of fusion, they were divided in opinion whether they were of igneous or of aqueous origin. In the sketch of the history of geology in the first volume, it was shown how much the polemical controversies on this subject retarded the advancement of the science, and how slowly the analogy of the rocks in question to the products of active volcanos was recognised.

* Elie de Beaumont, sur les Montagnes de l'Oisans, Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris, tome v. Hugi, Natur. Historische Alpenreise, Soleure, 1830.

† Syst. of Geol., vol. i. p. 136.

Most of the igneous rocks first investigated in Germany, France, and Scotland were associated with marine strata, and in some places they occurred in tabular masses or platforms at different heights, so as to form on the sides of some hills a succession of terraces or *steps*; from which circumstance they are called "trap" by Bergman (from *trappa*, Swedish for a flight of steps), a name afterwards adopted very generally into the nomenclature of the science.

When these trappean rocks were compared with lavas produced in the atmosphere, they were found to be in general less porous and more compact: and from this character, and their association with subaqueous deposits, the connexion of their origin with ordinary volcanic action was overlooked. In this instance the terms of comparison were imperfect; for a set of rocks, formed almost entirely under water, was contrasted with another which had cooled in the open air.

Yet the products of the ancient volcanos of Central France were classed, in reference, probably, to their antiquity, with the trap rocks, although they afford perfect counterparts to existing volcanos, and were evidently formed in the open air. Mont Dor and the Plomb du Cantal, indeed, differ in many respects from Vesuvius and Etna in the mineral constitution and structure of their lavas; but it is that kind of difference which we must expect to discover when we compare the products of any two active volcanos in distant regions, such as Teneriffe and Hecla, or Hecla and Cotopaxi.

The Amygdaloidal structure in many of the trap formations proves that they were originally cellular and porous, like lava; but the cells have been subsequently filled up with siliceous matter, carbonate of lime, zeolite, and other ingredients which form the nodules. The absence of this amygdaloidal structure may be said to be one of the negative characters of granite and other plutonic rocks.

Dr. MacCulloch, after examining with great attention the igneous rocks of Scotland, observes, "that it is a mere dispute about terms to refuse to the ancient eruptions of trap the name of submarine volcanos, for they are such in every essential point, although they no longer eject fire and smoke."* The same author also considers it not improbable that some of the volcanic rocks of the same country may have been poured out in the open air.†

The recent examination of the igneous rocks of Sicily, especially those of the Val di Noto, has proved that all the more ordinary varieties of European trap have been produced under the waters of the sea in the Newer Pliocene period; that is to say, since the Mediterranean has been inhabited by a great proportion of the existing species of testacea. We are, therefore, entitled to expect, that if we could obtain access to the

* Syst. of Geol., vol. ii. p. 114.

† Ibid.

existing bed of the ocean, and explore the igneous rocks poured out within the last five thousand years beneath the pressure of a sea of considerable depth, we should behold formations of modern date very similar to the most ancient trap rocks of our island. We cannot, however, expect the identity to be perfect; for time is ever working some alteration in the composition of these mineral masses, as, for example, by converting porous lava into amygdaloids.

Passage from trap into granite.—If a division be attempted between the trappean and volcanic rocks, it must be made between different parts of the same volcano,—nay, even the same rock, which would be called “trap,” where it fills a fissure and has assumed a solid crystalline form on slow cooling, must be termed volcanic, or lava, where it issues on the flanks of the mountain. Some geologists may, perhaps, be of opinion that melted matter, which has been poured out in the open air, may be conveniently called volcanic; while that which appears to have cooled at the bottom of the sea, or under pressure, but at no great depth from the surface, may be termed “trap:” but it is very doubtful whether such distinctions can be made without confusion, and whether we shall not be obliged to consider trap and volcanic as synonymous. On the other hand, the difficulty of discriminating the volcanic from the plutonic rocks is sufficiently great; there being an insensible passage from the most common forms of granite into trap or lava.

“The ordinary granite of Aberdeenshire,” says Dr. MacCulloch, “is the usual ternary compound of quartz, felspar, and mica; but sometimes hornblende is substituted for the mica. But in many places a variety occurs which is composed simply of felspar and hornblende; and in examining more minutely this duplicate compound, it is observed in some places to assume a fine grain, and at length to become undistinguishable from the greenstones of the trap family. It also passes in the same uninterrupted manner into a basalt, and at length into a soft claystone, with a schistose tendency on exposure, in no respect differing from those of the trap islands of the western coast.”* The same author mentions, that in Shetland a granite composed of hornblende, mica, felspar, and quartz, graduates in an equally perfect manner into basalt.†

It would be easy to multiply examples to prove that the granitic and trap rocks pass into each other, and are merely different forms which the same elements have assumed, according to the different circumstances under which they have consolidated from a state of fusion. What has been said respecting the mode of explaining the different texture of the central and external parts of the Vesuvian dikes may enable the reader in some measure to comprehend how such differences may originate.‡

The lavas, which are porous where they have flowed over the crater,

* Syst. of Geol., vol. i. p. 157.

† Ibid., p. 158.

‡ See ante, p. 276.

and cooled rapidly under comparatively slight pressure, appear compact and porphyritic in the dike. Now these dikes evidently communicate with the crater and the volcanic foci below ; so that we may suppose them to be continuous to a vast depth ; and the fluid matter below, which cools and consolidates slowly under so enormous a pressure, may be conceived to acquire a very distinct and more crystalline texture, like granite.

If it be objected that we do not find in mountain-chains volcanic dikes passing upwards into lava, and downwards into granite, we may answer, that our vertical sections are usually of small extent ; and if we find in certain places a transition from trap to porous lava, and in others a passage from granite to trap, it is as much as could be expected of this evidence. It should also be remembered, that a large proportion of the igneous rocks, when first formed, cannot be supposed to reach the surface, and these may assume the usual granitic texture without graduating into trap, or into such lava and scoriæ as are found on the flanks of a volcanic cone.

Theory of the origin of granite at all periods.—It is not uncommon for lava streams to require more than ten years to cool in the open air ; and where they are of great depth, a much longer period. The melted matter poured from Jorullo, in Mexico, in the year 1759, which accumulated in some places to the height of 550 feet, was found to retain a high temperature half a century after the eruption.* For what immense periods, then, may we not conceive that great masses of subterranean lava in the volcanic foci may remain in a red-hot or incandescent state, and how gradual must be the process of refrigeration ! This process may be sometimes retarded for an indefinite period, by the accession of fresh supplies of heat ; for we find that the lava in the crater of Stromboli, one of the Lipari islands, has been in a state of constant ebullition for the last two thousand years ; and we must suppose this fluid mass to communicate with some cauldron or reservoir of fused matter below. In the Isle of Bourbon, also, where there has been an emission of lava once in every two years for a long period, we may infer that the lava below is permanently in a state of liquefaction.

The great pressure of a superincumbent mass, and exclusion from contact with the atmosphere, and perhaps with the ocean, are some of the conditions which may be necessary to produce the granitic texture ; but what I have before said of the causes of volcanic heat operating at considerable depths, will show how complicated may be the processes going on in the interior of the earth, and how different from any within the sphere of our observation at the surface.†

If plutonic rocks, such as granite or porphyry, have originated far below as often as the volcanic have been generated at the surface, it will follow

* See Vol. I. p. 346.

† Book II. chapters xviii. and xix.

that no small quantity of the former class has been forming in the recent epoch ; since we suppose that about two thousand volcanic eruptions may occur in the course of every century, either above the waters of the sea or beneath them.*

We may also infer, that during each preceding period, whether tertiary or secondary, there have been granites and granitiform rocks generated ; because we have already discovered the monuments of ancient volcanic eruptions of almost every period.

In the next chapter I shall endeavour to show, that, in consequence of the great depths at which the plutonic rocks usually originate, and of the manner in which they are associated with the older sedimentary strata of each district, it is rarely possible to determine with exactness their relative age. It may be true that the greater portion of them now visible are of higher antiquity than the oldest secondary strata ; and yet they may have been produced in nearly *equal* quantities during *equal periods* of time, from the earliest to the most modern epochs, instead of diminishing in quantity at each successive epoch, as some geologists pretend.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON THE STRATIFIED ROCKS CALLED “ PRIMARY.”

Whether any “ primary” rocks are truly stratified—Difference between stratification and cleavage—Professor Sedgwick on the Slaty and the Jointed Structure—Alteration of sedimentary strata by dikes (p. 490.)—Manner in which heat may be conveyed through rocks—Conversion of sediment into crystalline strata—The term “ Hypogene” proposed as a substitute for “ primary” (p. 499.)—“ Metamorphic” for “ stratified primary” rocks—No regular order of succession of hypogene rocks—Cause of the high relative antiquity of visible hypogene formations (p. 501.)—They may have been produced at each successive period in equal quantities—Volume of hypogene rock supposed to have been formed since the Eocene period—Concluding remarks.

Whether any primary rocks are stratified.—It has been stated that the rocks usually called “ Primary,” are divisible into the stratified and the unstratified ; but some geologists have entertained doubts as to the propriety of applying the term stratified to any rocks of the crystalline or “ primary” class. They admit that the latter are often made up of tabu-

* See Vol. I. p. 373.

lar masses, or beds placed one upon the other, something in the manner of true strata ; but they deny that the analogy is so perfect as to indicate a similarity of origin : in other words, they do not believe the distinct beds into which crystalline rocks, such as gneiss, mica-schist, and hornblende-schist, are divided, to have been the result of sedimentary deposition from water.

Now it must be conceded that even in rocks which are unequivocally of sedimentary origin, and which contain organic remains, there are many lines of parting, that might easily be mistaken for strata, yet which have no connexion with stratification. Of these partings some have been distinguished by miners under the name of "joints," others by that of the "planes of cleavage."

Cleavage or slaty structure.—In an admirable essay recently published on this subject, Professor Sedgwick has described the ordinary forms, and speculated on the probable origin, of these different kinds of structure.* His descriptions are derived from an extensive series of original observations, made on the slate rocks of Cumberland and Wales, and will be read by all who are desirous of obtaining a clear and thorough knowledge of this important class of phenomena.

Some of these Cumbrian and Welsh rocks are decidedly of mechanical origin ; and some strata contain marine organic remains, so that they must have been deposited from water. But, besides being stratified, they are intersected by cleavage planes, which are usually inclined at a very considerable angle to the planes of the strata, and appear to be in no instance exactly coincident with them. In some cases the difference is so small that these planes might easily be supposed parallel ; but their inclination to each other in the Welsh chains, is upon an average as much as 30° to 40° . Sometimes the cleavage planes dip towards the same point of the compass as those of stratification, but more frequently they dip to opposite points.

"In that variety of slate which is used for roofing," says Professor Sedgwick, "the structure of the rock has been so modified that the traces of its original deposition are quite obliterated ; and this remark does not apply merely to single quarries, but sometimes to whole mountains. We can, however, in many slate quarries, and even in hand specimens of slate, discover a number of parallel stripes, sometimes of a lighter, and sometimes of a darker colour than the general mass ; and in rocks of the age I am considering, these stripes are universally parallel to the true bedding of the rocks. The proof of this is established by the fact that the assumption leads to consistent results ; that these stripes are always parallel to true beds whenever such beds can be discovered, whether by organic remains, by the alternations of dissimilar deposits, or by any

* Geol. Trans., vol. iii. Second Series, p. 461.

other ordinary means. Sometimes, however, all these means fail, and we may ramble for miles among mountains of slate without seeing a single trace of their original stratification.

"I think it obvious," continues the same author, "that the contortions of slate rocks are phenomena quite distinct from cleavage, and that the curves presented by such formations are the true lines of disturbed strata."*

In the accompanying section, given by the Professor to illustrate these

Fig. 223.



Parallel planes of cleavage intersecting curved strata.

appearances in the Welsh slate rocks, we see the cleavage planes preserving an almost geometrical parallelism, while they pass through contorted strata of "hard greenish slate, obviously of sedimentary origin." A region more than thirty miles in length, and eight to ten in breadth, exhibits this structure on a magnificent scale. Many of the contorted strata "are of a coarse mechanical structure; but subordinate to them are fine, crystalline, chloritic slates. But the coarser beds and the finer, the twisted and the straight, have all been subjected to one change.

"The slaty cleavage, however, is only brought out in perfection where the materials of the rock are fine and homogeneous. Yet although the coarser beds are not slaty, they are said to have usually a grain parallel to the cleavage planes of the finer beds, and it is only when the materials are very coarse that the cleavage planes entirely vanish."†

It is admitted by Professor Sedgwick, that some beds of greywacké are subdivided into very thin laminæ which resemble slate, and are used for the same purposes, yet have been produced by aqueous deposition. Nay, in certain cases, "these laminæ cannot be distinguished by their mineral structure from the slates of cleavage." It is proposed, however, to call such slates of deposition "flagstones," by reference to their sedimentary origin. A flagstone, it is said, may generally be distinguished from a true slate of cleavage by slight deviations in its plane; occasionally by what is called the ripple mark; by a dull granular surface; by scattered flakes of mica, entirely unlike the continuous chloritic flakes of a true cleavage; and sometimes by organic remains studded on its surface.

Some confusion will, I fear, arise from attempting to restrict the term slate to those cases alone where the slaty laminæ are oblique to the stratification; especially as we have seen that diagonal lamination may be pro-

* Sedgwick, Geol. Trans., vol. iii. Second Series, p. 474.

† Proceedings of Geol. Soc. No. 44. p. 360.

duced by sedimentary deposition, and that too in some instances with considerable regularity. But, whatever nomenclature we adopt, it is clear that three distinct forms of structure are exhibited in certain rocks throughout large districts: viz.—first, stratification; secondly, joints; and thirdly, slaty cleavage; the two last having no connexion with true bedding, and having been superinduced by causes absolutely independent of gravitation. All these different structures must have different names, even though there be some cases where it is impossible, after carefully studying the phenomena, to decide upon the class to which they belong.

Before treating of joints, it may be well to speak of the probable origin of slaty cleavage in those cases where it is decidedly unconnected with sedimentary deposition. Professor Sedgwick is of opinion that “no retreat of parts, no contraction in dimensions, in passing to a solid state, can account for the phenomenon.” It must be referred to crystalline or polar forces acting simultaneously and somewhat uniformly, in given directions, on large masses having a homogeneous composition.

“There is at first sight a difficulty in comprehending the vastness of those forces which nature must have applied in producing such effects. But, in crystallization, there is something like a definite polarity in each particle, by which it is compelled to turn in a given direction, and group itself with other particles in definite forms; and if this modification of internal structure be carried on through a very large mass of matter, is it not probable that there is an accumulated intensity of crystalline action in each part, so that the whole intensity of crystalline force modifying the mass is not equal to the sum of the forces necessary to crystallize each part independently, but is some function of that sum, whereby it may be increased almost indefinitely? I see nothing improbable in this kind of accumulated attraction.”*

Sir John Herschel, in allusion to this subject, has suggested to me, “that if rocks have been so heated as to allow a commencement of crystallization; that is to say, if they have been heated to a point at which the particles can begin to move amongst themselves, or at least on their own axes, some general law must then determine the position in which these particles will rest on cooling. Probably, that position will have some relation to the direction in which the heat escapes. Now, when all, or a majority of particles of the same nature have a general tendency to one position, that must of course determine a cleavage plane. Thus we see the infinitesimal crystals of fresh precipitated sulphate of baryte, and some other such bodies, arrange themselves alike in the fluid in which they float; so as, when stirred, all to glance with one light and give the appearance of silky filaments. Some sorts of soap in which insoluble margarates exist, exhibit the same phenomenon when mixed with water;

* Sedgwick, *Geol. Trans.*, vol. iii. Second Series, pp. 477, 478.

and what occurs in our experiments on a minute scale, may occur in nature on a great one, &c.”*

Jointed structure.—“Besides the planes of cleavage,” observes Professor Sedgwick, “we often find in large slate quarries one or more sets of cross joints, which, combined with cleavage, divide the rock into rhombohedral solids. These solids are not capable of indefinite subdivision into similar solids, except in one direction, namely, that of true cleavage; and in this way, even in hand specimens, we may generally distinguish the true cleavage planes from the joints. These last are fissures placed at definite distances from each other, the masses of rock between them having, generally speaking, no tendency to cleave in a direction parallel to them. Such a structure seems in most cases to have been produced mechanically, either by a strain upon the rock from external force, producing more or less regular sets of cracks and fissures, or by a mechanical tension on the mass, produced probably by contraction, during its passage from a fluid or semifluid, into a solid state. Cleavage planes are, on the contrary, the results of the ultimate chemical arrangement of the particles of a rock, and appear in most cases to be unconnected with any direct mechanical action.

“A slaty and jointed structure are, however, often exhibited together; and cases may arise where it is almost impossible to decide whether a certain set of fissures are to be called joints, or cleavage planes: but difficulties of this kind are the exception, and not the rule.”†

The jointed structure is common both to the stratified and unstratified rocks; but is best seen in the unstratified, as in granite, or columnar basalt. In the Swiss and Savoy Alps, Mr. Bakewell has well remarked that enormous masses of limestone are cut through so regularly by nearly vertical partings, and these are often so much more conspicuous than the seams of stratification, that an unexperienced observer will almost inevitably confound them, and suppose the strata to be perpendicular when in fact they are almost horizontal.‡

The cause of this tendency to a jointed structure is by no means understood; but it appears, from recent observations, that ice sometimes presents a similar arrangement of parts. Scoresby, indeed, when speaking of the icebergs of Spitzbergen, had long ago stated, “that they are full of rents, extending perpendicularly downwards, and dividing them into innumerable columns.” Colonel Jackson has lately investigated this subject more attentively, and has found that the ice on the Neva, at St. Petersburg, at the beginning of a thaw, when two feet in thickness, is traversed by rows of very minute air-bubbles extending in straight lines, sometimes a little

* Letter to the author, dated Cape of Good Hope, Feb. 20, 1836.

† Sedgwick, Geol. Trans., vol. iii. Second Series, pp. 480, 481.

‡ Introduction to Geology, chap. iv.

inflected, from the upper surface of the ice towards the lower, within from two to five inches of which they terminate. "Other blocks presented these bubbles united, so as to form cylindrical canals, a little thicker than a horse-hair. Observing still further," he says, "I found blocks in which the process was more advanced, and two, three, or more clefts, struck off in different directions from the vertical veins, so that a section perpendicular to the vein would represent in miniature the star-formed cracks of timber. Finally, in some pieces, these cracks united from top to bottom of the veins, separating the whole mass into vertical prisms, having a greater or less number of sides. In this state a slight shock was sufficient to detach them: and the block with its scattered fragments was in all respects the exact miniature resemblance, in crystal, of a Giant's Causeway. The surface was like a tessellated pavement, and the columns rose close, adhering and parallel, from the compact mass of a few inches at the under surface. More or less time is required for the process, which I have since seen in all its different stages."*

Stratification of granitic schists.—If we examine gneiss, which consists of the same materials as granite, or mica-schist, which is a compound of quartz and mica, or hornblende-schist, which is formed of hornblende and felspar, or any other member of the so-called primary division, we find that they are each made up of a succession of beds, the planes of which are, to a certain extent, parallel to each other in a manner analogous to that exhibited by sedimentary formations of all ages. They may occasionally exhibit, in addition, both a jointed and a slaty structure; but they are also divided into uneven foliated layers, or in some cases into thick beds which resemble strata of deposition.

The resemblance to stratification in the granitic schist often extends very far; for the beds are occasionally contorted, or they are made up of laminæ placed diagonally, as in many sedimentary formations before described,† such laminæ not being regularly parallel like the planes of cleavage.

This disposition of the layers is illustrated in the accompanying diagram, in which I have represented carefully the stratification of a coarse argil-

Fig. 224.



Lamination of clay-slate, Montagne de Seguinat, near Gavarnie, in the Pyrenees.

* Journ. of Roy. Geog. Soc., vol. v. p. 19.

† See ante, p. 318.

laceous schist, which I examined in the Pyrenees, part of which approaches in character to a green and blue roofing slate, while part is extremely quartzose, the whole mass passing downwards into micaceous schist. The vertical section here exhibited is about three feet in height, and the layers are sometimes so thin that fifty may be counted in the thickness of an inch. Some of them consist of pure quartz.

Another striking point of analogy between the stratification of the crystalline formations and that of the secondary and tertiary periods, is the alternation, in each, of beds varying greatly in composition, colour, and thickness. We observe, for instance, gneiss alternating with layers of black hornblende-schist, or with granular quartz, or limestone; and the interchange of these different strata may be repeated for an indefinite number of times. In like manner, mica-schist alternates with chlorite-schist, and with granular limestone in thin layers.

As we observe in the secondary and tertiary formations strata of pure siliceous sand alternating with micaceous sand and with layers of clay, so in the "primary" we have beds of pure quartz rock alternating with mica-schist and clay-slate. As in the secondary and tertiary series we meet with limestone alternating again and again with micaceous or argillaceous sand, so we find in the "primary" gneiss and mica-schist alternating with pure and impure granular limestones.

Passage of gneiss into granite.—But if we attribute the stratification of gneiss, mica-schist, and other associated rocks, to sedimentary deposition from a fluid, we encounter this difficulty,—that there is often a transition from gneiss, a member of the stratified and therefore sedimentary series, into granite, which, as I have shown, is of igneous origin. Gneiss is composed of the same ingredients as granite, and its texture is equally crystalline. It sometimes occurs in thick beds, and in these the rock is often quite undistinguishable, in hand specimens, from granite; yet the lines of stratification are still evident. These lines, it is conceived, imply deposition from water; while the passage into granite would lead us to infer an igneous origin. In what manner, then, can these apparently conflicting views be reconciled? The Huttonian hypothesis offers, I think, the only satisfactory solution of this problem. According to that theory, the materials of gneiss were originally deposited from water in the usual form of aqueous strata; but these strata were subsequently altered by subterranean heat, so as to assume a new texture. The reader will be in some degree prepared, by what has been stated in the preceding pages, to conclude, that when voluminous masses of melted and incandescent rock, accompanied by intensely heated gases under great pressure, have been for ages in contact with sedimentary deposits, they may produce great alterations in their texture; and this alteration may admit of every intermediate gradation between that resulting from perfect fusion and the slightest modification which heat can produce.

Some light has been thrown on the changes which stratified masses may undergo subsequently to their original deposition by direct experiment on the fusion of rocks in the laboratory, and still more by observations on strata in contact with igneous veins and dikes. In studying the latter class of phenomena, we have the advantage of examining the condition of the same continuous rock at some distance from the dike, where it has escaped the influence of heat, and its state where it has been near to, or in contact with, the fused mass. The changes thus exhibited may be regarded as the results of a series of experiments, made by nature on a greater scale than we can imitate, and under every variety of condition, in respect to the mineral ingredients acted upon, the intensity of heat or pressure, and the celerity or slowness of the cooling process.

Strata altered by volcanic dikes—Plass Newydd.—One of the most interesting examples of alteration in the proximity of a volcanic dike occurs near Plass Newydd, in Anglesea, described by professor Henslow. The dike is 134 feet wide, and consists of a rock which is a compound of felspar and augite (dolerite of some authors). Strata of shale and argillaceous limestone, through which it cuts perpendicularly, are altered to a distance of thirty, or even, in some places, to thirty-five feet from the edge of the dike. The shale, as it approaches the basalt, becomes gradually more compact, and is most indurated where nearest the junction. Here it loses part of its schistose structure, but the separation into parallel layers is still discernible. In several places the shale is converted into hard porcellaneous jasper. In the most hardened part of the mass the fossil shells, principally *Productæ*, are nearly obliterated; yet even here their impressions may frequently be traced. The argillaceous limestone undergoes analogous mutations, losing its earthy texture as it approaches the dike, and becoming granular and crystalline. But the most extraordinary phenomenon is the appearance in the shale of numerous crystals of analcime and garnet, which are distinctly confined to those portions of the rock affected by the dike.* Garnets have been observed, under very analogous circumstances, in High Teesdale, by Professor Sedgwick, where they also occur in shale and limestone, altered by a basaltic dike. This discovery is most interesting, because garnets often abound in mica-schist; and we see in the instance above cited that they did not previously exist in the shale and limestone, but have evidently been produced by heat or heated gases in rocks in which the marks of stratification have not been effaced.

Stirling Castle.—To select another example of alteration by dikes: the rock of Stirling Castle is a calcareous sandstone, fractured and forcibly displaced by a mass of green-stone, which has evidently invaded the strata in a melted state. The sandstone has been indurated, and has assumed

* Trans. of Cambridge Phil. Soc., vol. i. p. 406.

a texture approaching to hornstone near the junction. So also in Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Craig, near Edinburgh, a sandstone is seen to come in contact with green-stone, and to be converted into a jaspideous rock.*

Antrim.—In several parts of the county of Antrim, in the North of Ireland, chalk with flints is traversed by basaltic dikes. The chalk is there converted into granular marble near the basalt, the change sometimes extending eight or ten feet from the wall of the dike, being greatest near the point of contact, and thence gradually decreasing till it becomes evanescent. "The extreme effect," says Dr. Berger, "presents a dark brown crystalline limestone, the crystals running in flakes as large as those of coarse *primitive* limestone; the next state is saccharine, then fine-grained and arenaceous; a compact variety, having a porcellaneous aspect, and a bluish-gray colour, succeeds: this, towards the outer edge, becomes yellowish-white, and insensibly graduates into the unaltered chalk. The flints in the altered chalk usually assume a gray yellowish colour."† All traces of organic remains are effaced in that part of the limestone which is most crystalline.

As the carbonic acid has not been expelled, in this instance, from that part of the rock which must be supposed to have been melted, the change probably took place under considerable pressure; for Sir James Hall proved that, under ordinary circumstances, it would require the weight of about 1700 feet of sea-water, which would be equivalent to the pressure of a column of liquid lava about 600 feet high, to prevent this acid from being given off. The experiments of Faraday have recently shown that, if carbonate of lime be perfectly dry, it may be melted under a very slight pressure, without the carbonic acid assuming a gaseous form; but it is probable that in the earth's crust calcareous rocks are rarely, if ever, entirely free from moisture.

Another of the dikes of the north-east of Ireland has converted a mass of red sandstone into hornstone.‡ By another, the slate-clay of the coal-measures has been indurated, and has assumed the character of flinty slate;§ and in another place the slate clay of the lias has been changed into flinty slate, which still retains numerous impressions of ammonites.|| One of the green-stone dikes of the same country passes through a bed of coal, which it reduces to a cinder for the space of nine feet on each side.¶ Yet there are places in the north of Ireland, where the chalk is

* Illust. of Hutt. Theory, §§ 253 and 261. Dr. MacCulloch, Geol. Trans., First Series, vol. ii. p. 305.

† Dr. Berger, Geol. Trans., First Series, vol. iii. p. 172.

‡ Rev. W. Conybeare, Geol. Trans., First Series, vol. iii. p. 201.

§ Ibid., p. 205.

|| Ibid., p. 213; and Playfair, Illust. of Hutt. Theory, § 253.

¶ Ibid., p. 206.

scarcely, if at all, altered by the contact of basaltic dikes, and a similar phenomenon is not unfrequent in other districts, at the junction of trap with different kinds of strata. This great inequality in the effects of the igneous rocks may often arise from an original difference in their temperature and in that of the entangled gases, such as is ascertained to prevail in different lavas, or in the same lava near its source, and at a distance from it. The power also of the invaded rocks to conduct heat may vary according to their composition, structure, and the fractures which they may have experienced, and, perhaps, as I shall hint in the sequel, the quantity of steam or hot water they contain. It should also be borne in mind that in some cases the melted rock may begin to cool from the first; whereas, in other cases, although parting constantly with its heat, it may receive fresh accessions of caloric from below.

The secondary sandstones in Sky are converted into solid quartz in several places where they come in contact with veins or masses of trap; and a bed of quartz, says Dr. MacCulloch, has been found near a mass of trap, among the coal strata of Fife, which was in all probability a stratum of ordinary sandstone subsequently indurated by the action of heat.*

Alterations of strata in contact with granite.—Having selected these from innumerable examples of changes produced by volcanic dikes, we may next consider those caused by the contiguity of plutonic rocks. To some of these I have already adverted, when speaking of granite veins, and endeavouring to establish the igneous origin of granite. It was stated that the main body of the Cornish granite sends forth veins through the killas of that country,†—a coarse argillaceous schist, which is converted into hornblende-schist near the contact with the veins. These appearances are well seen at the junction of the granite and killas in St. Michael's Mount, a small island nearly 300 feet high, situated in the bay, at a distance of about three miles from Penzance.

The granite, says Mr. De la Beche, of Dartmoor, in Devonshire, has intruded itself into the greywacké, twisting and contorting the strata, and sending veins into them. Hence some of the slate rocks have become “micaceous, others more indurated, and with the characters of mica-slate and gneiss, while others again appear converted into a hard-zoned rock strongly impregnated with felspar.”‡

We learn from the investigations of M. Dufrénoy, that in the eastern Pyrenees there are mountain masses of granite posterior in date to the lias and chalk of that district, and that these secondary rocks are greatly altered in texture, and often charged with iron ore, in the neighbourhood of the granite. Thus in the environs of St. Martin, near St. Paul de Fénouillet, the chalky limestone becomes more crystalline and saccharoid

* Syst. of Geol., vol. i. p. 206.

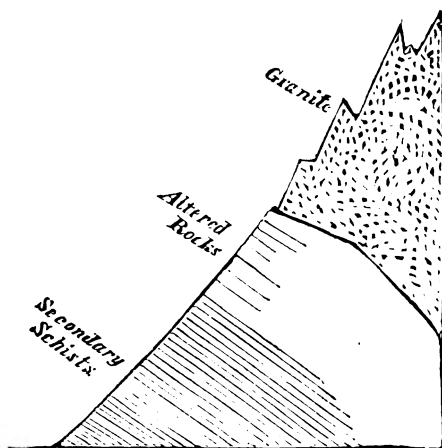
† See diagram, Fig. 221., ante, p. 476.

‡ Geol. Manual, p. 479.

as it approaches the granite, and loses all traces of the fossils which it previously contained in abundance. At some points also it becomes dolomitic, and filled with small veins of carbonate of iron, and spots of red iron-ore. At Rancié the lias nearest the granite is not only filled with iron-ore, but charged with pyrites, tremolite, garnet, and a new mineral somewhat allied to felspar, called, from the place in the Pyrenees where it occurs, "couzeranite."

In the department of the Hautes Alpes, in France, near Vizille, M. Elie de Beaumont traced a black argillaceous limestone, charged with belemnites, to within a few yards of a mass of granite. Here the limestone begins to put on a granular texture, but is extremely fine-grained. When nearer the junction, it becomes gray and has a saccharoid structure. In another locality, near Champoleon, a granite composed of quartz, black mica, and rose-coloured felspar, is observed partly to overlie the secondary rocks, producing an alteration which extends for about thirty feet downwards, diminishing in the beds which lie farthest from the granite. (See Fig. 225.) In the altered mass the argillaceous beds are

Fig. 225.



Junction of granite with Jurassic or oolite strata in the Alps, near Champoleon.

hardened, the limestone is saccharoid, the grits quartzose, and in the midst of them is a thin layer of an imperfect granite. It is also an important circumstance, that near the point of contact, both the granite and the secondary rocks become metaliferous, and contain nests and small veins of blende, galena, iron, and copper pyrites. The stratified rocks become harder and more crystalline, but the granite, on the contrary, softer and less perfectly crystallized near the junction.*

* Elie de Beaumont, sur les Montagnes de l'Oisans, &c., Mém. de la Soc. d'Hist. Nat. de Paris, tome v.

It will appear from sections in the Alps, described by MM. Hugi and Studer, that some of the secondary beds of limestone and slate, which are in a similar manner overlaid by granite, have been altered into gneiss and mica-schist.* Some of these altered sedimentary formations are supposed, by M. Elie de Beaumont, to be of the age of the lias of England, and others to be even as modern as the Jurassic or oolite formations.

We can scarcely doubt, in these cases, that the heat communicated by the granitic mass, accompanied, perhaps, by gases at a high temperature, have reduced the contiguous strata to semifusion, and that, on cooling slowly, the rock assumed a crystalline texture. The experiments of Gregory Watt prove, distinctly, that a rock need not be perfectly melted in order that a re-arrangement of its component particles should take place, and that a more crystalline texture should ensue.† We may easily suppose, therefore, that all traces of shells and other organic remains may be destroyed, and that new chemical combinations may arise, without the mass being so fused as that the lines of stratification should be wholly obliterated.

In allusion to the passage from granite to gneiss, above described,‡ Dr. MacCulloch remarks, that, “in numerous parts of Scotland, where the leading masses of gneiss are schistose, evenly stratified, and scarcely ever traversed by granite veins, they become contorted and irregular as they approach the granite; assuming also the granitic character, and becoming intersected by veins, numerous in proportion to the vicinity of the mass. The conclusion,” he adds, “is obvious; the fluid granite has invaded the aqueous stratum as far as its influence could reach, and thus far has filled it with veins, disturbed its regularity, and generated in it a new mineral character, often absolutely confounded with its own. And if the more remote beds, and those alternating with other rocks, are not thus affected, it is not only that it has acted less on those; but that, if it had equally affected them, they never could have existed, or would have been all granitic and venous gneiss.”§

It should, however, be understood, that the alterations caused by volcanic dikes, granite veins, and even large masses of granite, can only afford us some analogy to those which have given rise to the metamorphic structure; for, according to the views explained in the second book (Chaps. xviii. and xix.), volcanic heat itself may be derived from chemical and electrical action pervading large portions of the earth's crust. This action, which, when most intense, may reduce the elements of rocks to fusion, and give rise to the most perfect granitic structure, may perhaps,

* Hugi, *Natur. Historische Alpenreise*, Soleure, 1830. Studer, *Westlichen Alpen*.

† *Phil. Trans.*, 1804.

‡ See ante, p. 490.

§ *Syst. of Geol.*, vol. ii. p. 145.

when less energetic, give rise to a crystalline texture, without destroying stratification.

As to the degree of heat required to superinduce such changes, it must, in the present state of science, be matter of conjecture ; but some geologists object to the metamorphic theory, on the ground that rocks are extremely bad conductors of heat. Now it is worthy of consideration, how far heat, instead of being conducted through the solid parts of rocks, may be carried by heated gases through their pores ; for we have seen that volcanic eruptions are attended by the evolution of steam and other gases, which rush out in enormous volume, and at a high temperature, for days, weeks, or years continuously, and which are given off by lava even after it has begun to assume a solid form. These aëriform fluids, if unable to force their way into the atmosphere, may, nevertheless, when brought into contact with rocks, pass through their pores. According to the experiments of Henry, water, under an hydrostatic pressure of ninety-six feet, will absorb three times as much carbonic acid gas as it can under the ordinary pressure of the atmosphere. Although this increased power of absorption would be diminished, in consequence of the higher temperature found to exist as we descend in the earth, yet Professor Bischoff has shown that the heat by no means augments in such a proportion as to counteract the effect of augmented pressure.* There are other gases, as well as the carbonic acid, which water absorbs, and more rapidly in proportion to the amount of pressure. Now even the most compact rocks may be regarded, before they have been exposed to the air and dried, in the light of sponges filled with water ; and it is conceivable that heated gases brought into contact with them, at great depths, may be absorbed readily, and transfused through their pores. Although the gaseous matter first absorbed would soon be condensed, and part with its heat, yet the continued arrival of fresh supplies from below, might, in the course of ages, cause the temperature of the water, and with it that of the containing rock, to be materially raised.

M. Fournet, in his description of the metaliferous gneiss near Clermont, in Auvergne, states that all the minute fissures of the rock are quite saturated with free carbonic acid gas, which rises plentifully from the soil there and in many parts of the surrounding country. The various elements of the gneiss, with the exception of the quartz, are all softened ; and new combinations of the acid, with lime, iron, and manganese, are continually in progress.†

Another illustration of the power of subterranean gases is afforded by the stufas of St. Calogero, situated in the largest of the Lipari Islands. Here, according to the description lately published by Hoffmann, hori-

* Poggendorf's Annalen, No. XVI., Second Series, vol. iii.

† See Vol. I. p. 209.

zontal strata of tuff, extending for four miles along the coast, and forming cliffs more than 200 feet high, have been discoloured in various places, and strangely altered by the "all-penetrating vapours." Dark clays have become yellow, or often snow-white; or have assumed a chequered and brecciated appearance, being crossed with ferruginous red stripes. In some places the fumeroles have been found by analysis to consist partly of sublimations of oxide of iron; but it also appears that veins of calcedony and opal, and others of fibrous gypsum, have resulted from these volcanic exhalations.*

I have before referred to M. Virlet's account of the corrosion of hard, flinty, and jaspideous rocks near Corinth, by the prolonged agency of subterranean gases;† and to Dr. Daubeny's description of the decomposition of trachytic rocks in the Solfatara, near Naples, by sulphuretted hydrogen and muriatic acid gases.‡

Although in all these instances we can only study the phenomena as exhibited at the surface, it is clear that the gaseous fluids must have made their way through the whole thickness of porous or fissured rocks, which intervene between the subterranean reservoirs of gas and the external air. The extent, therefore, of the earth's crust, which the vapours have permeated and are now permeating, may be thousands of fathoms in thickness, and their heating and modifying influence may be spread throughout the whole of this solid mass.

The study of metaliferous veins, also, especially those which are admitted to be fissures filled from below, is calculated to throw light on the manner in which heated vapours and aqueous solutions may find their way up through the interstices of rocks, raising their temperature, and sometimes transfusing into them new mineral substances. A great number of these fissures have evidently been filled in the first instance with rubbish, resulting from fragments of the adjoining rocks; and through this rubbish various siliceous, calcareous, and metallic vapours or solutions appear to have risen, causing precipitates of quartz, hornstone, calcareous spar, lead, zinc, and other metals, often perfectly distinct in their composition from any of the elements of the rocks which form the walls of such fissures. Proofs are not wanting that these rents have been caused and filled at different epochs. Thus, for example, some of the silver and cobalt veins in Bohemia appear, from the observations of Mayer and Fournet, to be of the age of the chalk,§ while other metaliferous veins, in the same district, were contemporaneous with a tertiary basalt.|| M. Necker has also shown that a relation exists between the position of numerous metallic

* Hoffmann's *Liparischen Inseln*, p. 38. Leipzig, 1832.

† See ante, p. 126; and *Bulletin de la Soc. Géol. de France*, tom. ii. p. 330.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 320, 321; and Daubeny's *Volcanos*, p. 167.

§ D'Aubuisson, *Traité de Géog.*, tom. iii. p. 497.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 508.

veins in various countries and subjacent masses of plutonic rock ; so that the emanations rising from such igneous masses may, in many instances, have given rise to the more crystalline substances, whether metallic or not, which constitute the contents of the veins.

If, after more fully reflecting upon those various causes of change in the composition and structure of rocks, which have only been glanced at in the above sketch, the reader conceives the possibility of a very great amount of alteration being induced in the course of time, he may be prepared to conjecture that gneiss and mica-schist may be nothing more than altered micaceous and argillaceous sandstones, and that granular quartz may have been derived from siliceous sandstone, and compact quartz from the same materials. Clay-slate may be altered shale, and shale appears to be clay which has been subjected to great pressure. Granular marble has probably originated in the form of ordinary limestone, having in many instances been replete with shells and corals now obliterated, while calcareous sands and marls have been changed into impure crystalline limestones.

"Hornblende-schist," says Dr. MacCulloch, "may at first have been mere clay ; for clay or shale is found altered by trap into Lydian stone, a substance differing from hornblende-schist almost solely in compactness and uniformity of texture."* "In Shetland," remarks the same author, "argillaceous-schist (or clay-slate), when in contact with granite, is sometimes converted into hornblende-schist, the schist becoming first siliceous, and ultimately, at the contact, hornblende-schist."†

Associated with the rocks termed primary, we meet with anthracite, just as we find beds of coal in sedimentary formations ; and we know that, in the vicinity of some trap dikes, coal is converted into anthracite.

This theory, if confirmed by observation and experiment, may enable us to account for the high position in the series usually held by clay-slate relatively to hornblende-schist, as also to gneiss and mica-schist, which so commonly alternate with hornblende-schist ; for we must suppose the heat which alters the strata to proceed, in almost all cases, from below upwards, and to act with greatest intensity on the inferior strata. If, therefore, several sets of argillaceous strata or shales be superimposed upon each other in a vertical series of beds in the same district, the lowest of these will be converted into hornblende-schist, while the uppermost may continue in the condition of clay-slate.

It has been objected that the chemical composition of the secondary strata differs essentially from that of the crystalline schists into which they are supposed to be convertible.‡ The "primary" schists, it is said, usually contain a considerable proportion of potash or of soda, which the

* Syst. of Geol., vol. i. p. 210.

† Ibid., p. 211

‡ Dr. Boase, Primary Geology, p. 319.

secondary clays, shales and slates do not, these last being the result of the decomposition of felspathic rocks, from which the alkaline matter has been abstracted during the process of decomposition. But this reasoning proceeds on insufficient and apparently mistaken data; for a large portion of what is usually called clay, marl, shale, and slate does actually contain a certain and often a considerable proportion of alkali; so that it is difficult in many countries to obtain clay or shale sufficiently free from alkaline ingredients to allow of their being burnt into bricks or used for pottery.

Thus the argillaceous shales, as they are called, and slates of the old red-sandstone, in Forfarshire and other parts of Scotland, are so much charged with alkali, derived from triturated felspar, that, instead of hardening when exposed to fire, they melt readily into a glass. They contain no lime, but appear to consist of extremely minute grains of the various ingredients of granite, which are distinctly visible in the coarser-grained varieties, and in almost all the interposed sandstones. These laminated clays, marls, and shales might certainly, if crystallized, resemble in composition many of the primary strata.

Another objection to the metamorphic theory has been derived from the alternation of highly crystalline strata with others having a less crystalline texture. The heat, it is said, in its ascent from below must have traversed the less altered schists before it reached a higher and more crystalline bed. In answer to this, it may be observed, that if a number of strata differing greatly in composition from each other be subjected to equal quantities of heat, there is every probability that some will be more fusible than others. Some, for example, will contain soda, potash, lime, or some other ingredient capable of acting as a flux; while others may be destitute of the same elements, and so refractory as to be very slightly affected by a degree of heat capable of reducing others to semi-fusion. Nor should it be forgotten that, as a general rule, the less crystalline rocks do really occur in the upper, and the more crystalline in the lower part of each metamorphic series.

To some it appears a phenomenon very difficult of explanation, that detached masses of granite, and even layers of it, should often occur in the midst of strata, near their contact with granite. This appearance of isolation is usually deceptive, arising from the intersection in a vertical precipice of tortuous veins of granite, as Professor Henslow has shown to be the case in several places in the cliffs of Anglesea.* I may also remark, that if unaltered sedimentary strata contained here and there layers or nests of the ingredients of granite, the rest of the mass consisting of different materials, and if the temperature of the whole has been sufficiently raised by plutonic action, the result might be, that nodules and threads of granite might be formed in certain spots only.

* Camb. Trans., vol. i.

The term "Hypogene" proposed instead of Primary.—It will appear from the reasoning explained in this and the preceding chapter, that the popular nomenclature of Geology, in reference to the rocks called "primary," is not only imperfect, but in a great degree founded on a false theory; inasmuch as some granites and granitic schists are of origin posterior to many secondary rocks. In other words, some *primary* formations can already be shown to be newer than many *secondary* groups—a manifest contradiction in terms.

Yet granite and gneiss, and the families of stratified and unstratified rocks connected with each of them, belong to one great natural division of mineral masses having certain characters in common; and it is therefore convenient that the class to which they belong should receive some common name—a name which must not be of chronological import, and must express, on the one hand, some peculiarity equally attributable to granite and gneiss (to the plutonic as well as the *altered* rocks), and which, on the other, must have reference to characters in which those rocks differ, both from the volcanic and from the *unaltered* sedimentary strata. I propose the term "hypogene" for this purpose, derived from *ὑπο*, *subter*, and *γενεσθαι*, *nascor*, a word implying the theory that granite and gneiss are both *nether-formed* rocks, or rocks which have not assumed their present form and structure at the surface. It is true that gneiss and all stratified rocks must have been deposited originally at the surface, or on that part of the surface of the globe which is covered by water; but, according to the views explained in this and the foregoing chapter, they could never have acquired their crystalline texture, unless acted upon by heat and chemical forces under pressure in those regions, and under those circumstances where the plutonic rocks are generated.

The term "Metamorphic" proposed for stratified primary.—We may divide the hypogene rocks, then, into the unstratified, or plutonic, and the *altered* stratified. For these last the term "metamorphic" (from *μετα*, *trans*, *μερφν*, *forma*,) may be used. The last mentioned name need not, however, be often resorted to, because we may speak of hypogene *strata*, hypogene *limestone*, hypogene *schist*; and this appellation will suffice to distinguish the formations so designated from the plutonic rocks. By referring to the table (No. II. p. 509), the reader will see the chronological relation which I conceive the two classes of hypogene rocks to bear to the strata of different ages.

No order of succession in hypogene formations.—When we regard the tertiary and secondary formations simply as mineral masses uncharacterized by organic remains, we perceive an indefinite series of beds of limestone, clay, marl, siliceous sand, sandstone, coal, and other materials, alternating again and again without any fixed or determinate order of position. The same may be said of the hypogene formations; for in these a similar want of arrangement is manifest, if we compare those occurring

in different countries. Gneiss, mica-schist, hornblende schist, quartz-rock, hypogene limestone, and the rest, have no invariable order of superposition, although, for reasons above explained, clay-slate must usually hold a superior position relatively to hornblende schist.

I do not deny that, in a particular mountain-chain, a chronological succession of hypogene formations may be recognised, for the same reason that in a country of limited extent there is an order of position in the secondary and tertiary rocks, limestone predominating in one part of the series, clay in another, siliceous sand in a third, and so of other compounds. It is probable that a similar prevalence of a regular order of arrangement in the hypogene series throughout certain districts led the earlier geologists into a belief that they should be able to fix a definite order of succession for the various members of this great class throughout the world.

That expectation has certainly not been realized; yet was it more reasonable than the doctrine of the universality of particular kinds of rock which were admitted to be of sedimentary origin; for there is undoubtedly a remarkable identity in the mineral character of the hypogene formations, both stratified and unstratified, in all countries; although the notion of a uniform order of succession in the different groups must be abandoned.

The student may, perhaps, object to the views above given of the relation of the sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, on the ground that there is frequently, indeed usually, an abrupt passage from one to the other. This phenomenon, however, admits of the same explanation as the fact that the bed of lakes and seas are now frequently composed of hypogene rocks. In these localities the hypogene formations have been brought up near to the surface, and laid bare by denudation. New sedimentary strata are thrown down upon them, and in this manner the two classes of rocks, the aqueous and the hypogene, come into immediate contact, without any gradation from one to the other. As we suppose the plutonic and metamorphic rocks to have been uplifted at all periods in the earth's history, so as to have formed the bottom of the ocean and of lakes, by the same operations which have carried up marine strata to the summits of lofty mountains, we must suppose the juxtaposition of the two great orders of rocks, now alluded to, to have been a necessary result of all former revolutions of the globe.

But occasionally a transition is observable from strata containing shells, and displaying an evident mechanical structure, to others which are partially altered; and from these again we sometimes pass insensibly into the hypogene series. Some of the argillaceous schists in Cornwall are of this description, being undistinguishable from the hypogene schists of many countries, and yet exhibiting, in a few spots, faint traces of organic remains. In parts of Germany, also, there are schists which, from their chemical condition, must be called metamorphic; yet which are interstra-

tified with greywacké, a rock probably modified by heat, but which contains casts of shells, and often displays unequivocal marks of being an aggregate of fragments of pre-existing rocks.

The same observation holds true in respect to the Cumbrian and Welsh slate rocks before alluded to as described by Professor Sedgwick.* They are metamorphic slates alternating with a few mechanical and fossiliferous beds. If it be asked by what characters we can draw the line or determine where the metamorphic series ends, and the sedimentary begins, I reply, that if this be difficult or impossible, it only strengthens the argument adduced in the preceding part of this chapter; for, according to the theory proposed, we must expect to find strata in every intermediate condition between the most and the least altered.

Had Werner's term "transition" been restricted exclusively to certain peculiarities of mineral structure, and never connected with the presence of particular species of fossils, in consequence of which it soon acquired a chronological import, that term might have been conveniently retained to designate an intermediate condition of strata when they exhibit the characters of rocks of the metamorphic series with occasional traces of a mechanical structure and organic remains.

Some geologists, who shrink from the theory that all the hypogene strata, beautifully compact and crystalline as they are, have once been in the state of ordinary mud, clay, marl, sand, gravel, and limestone, such as are now forming beneath the waters, resort, in their desire to escape from such conclusions, to the hypothesis, that *chemical causes* once acted with intense energy, and that by their influence purely crystalline strata were precipitated; a theory which to me appears as mysterious and unphilosophical as the doctrine of a "plastic virtue," introduced by the earlier writers to explain the origin of fossil-shells and bones.

Relative age of the visible hypogene rocks.—It was stated, at the close of the last chapter, that a great portion of the plutonic rocks now visible are of higher antiquity than the oldest secondary strata; the same may be said of the stratified hypogene formations, which are therefore entitled to the appellation of primary, in the strict sense of the word, as anterior in age to the greywacké, or oldest known fossiliferous group. But we can, in some instances, demonstrate that there are granites of posterior origin to certain secondary strata, and that *secondary* strata have been converted into the *metamorphic*. Examples of such phenomena are rare, and their rarity is quite consistent with the theory, that the hypogene formations, both stratified and unstratified, may have been always generated in nearly equal quantities during periods of equal duration.

I conceive that the granite and gneiss of periods more recent than the carboniferous and greywacké formations are still, for the most part, con-

* See ante, p. 485.

cealed; and those portions which are visible can rarely be shown, by geological evidence, to have originated during secondary periods. It is very possible, for example, that considerable tracts of hypogene strata in the Alps may be altered oolite, altered lias, or altered secondary rocks inferior to the lias; but we can scarcely ever hope to substantiate the fact, because, whenever the change of texture is complete, no characters remain to afford us any insight into the probable age of the mass. Where granite happens to have intruded itself in such a manner as partially to overlie a mass of lias or other strata, as in the case before alluded to (Fig. 225, ante, p. 493), we may prove that *fossiliferous* strata have been converted into gneiss, mica-schist, clay-slate, or granular marble; but if the action of the heat upon the strata had been more intense, these inferences could not have been drawn; and it might then have been supposed that no alpine hypogene strata were newer than the oldest secondary rocks.

Considerable difficulty and misapprehension, in regard to the antiquity of the metamorphic rocks, may arise from the circumstance of their having been deposited at one period, and having assumed their crystalline texture at another. Thus, for example, if an Eocene granite should invade the lias, and superinduce a hypogene structure, to what period shall we refer the altered strata? Shall we say that they are metamorphic rocks of the Eocene or Liassic eras? They assumed their stratified form when the animals and plants of the lias flourished; they have become metamorphic during the Eocene period. It would be preferable, in such instances, I think, to consider them as hypogene strata of the Eocene period, or of that in which they were altered; yet it would rarely be possible to establish their true age. For this purpose we ought to know the granite, to which the change of texture was due, to be newer than the lias which it penetrated; but there would rarely be any data to show that this granite might not have been injected at the close of the Liassic period, or at some much later era.

The metamorphic rocks must in all cases be the oldest, that is to say, they must lie at the bottom of each series of superimposed strata; but the hypogene strata of one country may be, and frequently are, of a very different age from those of another. The greater part, however, of the visible hypogene rocks are, probably, more ancient than the oldest fossiliferous formations. In the latter we frequently discover pebbles of hypogene rocks, namely, granite, gneiss, mica-schist, and clay-slate; and the carboniferous rocks often rest upon the hypogene, without exhibiting any marks of change at the junction. According to the views before explained of the operations of earthquakes, we ought not to expect plutonic and metamorphic rocks of the more modern eras to have reached the surface generally; for we must suppose many geological periods to elapse before a mass, which has assumed its particular form far below the level of the sea, can have been upraised and laid open to view above that level. Beds

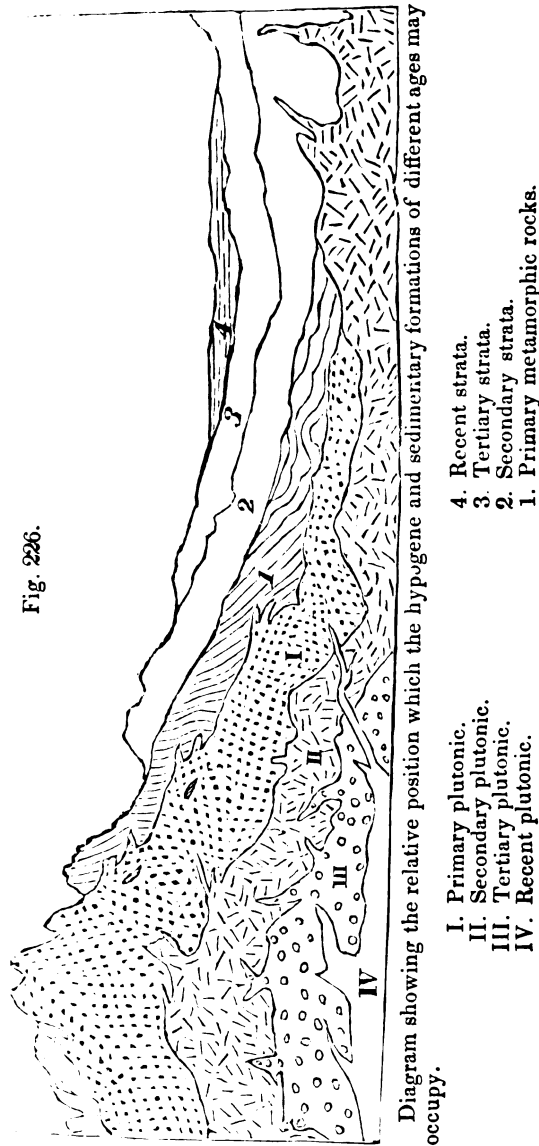
containing marine shells sometimes appear in the principal mountain-chains, at the height of two or three miles above the sea; but they always belong to formations of considerable antiquity: still more, then, should we be prepared to find the hypogene rocks now in sight to be of high relative antiquity, since, before they could be brought up to view, they must probably have risen from a site far inferior to the bottom of the ocean.

The cause of the great age of the plutonic and metamorphic rocks, *now in sight*, may be elucidated by a familiar illustration. Suppose two months to be the usual time required for passing from some tropical country to our island, and that an annual importation takes place of a certain species of insect which can be reared only in the climate of that equatorial country, and the ordinary term of whose life is two months. It is evident that no living individuals of that species could ever be seen in England except in extreme old age. The young may come annually into the world in great numbers; but, in order to see them, we must travel to lands near the equator.

In like manner, if the hypogene rocks can originate only at great depths in the regions of subterranean heat, and if it requires many geological epochs to raise them to the surface, they must be very ancient before they make their appearance in the superficial parts of the earth's crust. They may still be forming in every century, and they may have been produced in equal quantities during each successive geological period of equal duration; but in order to see them in a nascent state, slowly consolidating from a state of fusion, or semi-fusion, it would be necessary to descend into the "fuelled entrails" of the earth.

In the accompanying diagram, Fig. 226., an attempt is made to show the inverted order in which the sedimentary and plutonic formations may occur in the earth's crust; subterposition in the plutonic, like superposition in the sedimentary rocks, being for the most part characteristic of a newer age.

The oldest plutonic rock, No. I., supposed to have consolidated from a state of fusion before any of the fossiliferous rocks now on the surface were deposited, has been upheaved at successive periods until it has become exposed to view in a mountain-chain. This protrusion of No. I. has been caused by the igneous agency which produced the new plutonic rocks Nos. II. III. and IV. Part of the metamorphic rocks No. 1. have also been raised to the surface by the same gradual process. It will be observed that the Recent *strata* No. 4. and the Recent plutonic rock No. IV. are the most remote from each other in position, although of contemporaneous date. According to this hypothesis the convulsions of many periods will be required before *Recent* granite will be upraised so as to form the highest ridges and central axes of mountain-chains. During that time the *Recent strata* No. 4, might be covered by a great many newer sedimentary formations.



As the progress of decay and reproduction by aqueous agency is incessant on the surface of the continents, and in the bed of the ocean, while the hypogene rocks are generated below, or are rising gradually from the volcanic foci, there must ever be a remodelling of the earth's surface in the time intermediate between the origin of each set of plutonic and metamorphic rocks, and the protrusion of the same rocks into the atmosphere or the ocean. Suppose the principal source of the Etnean lavas to lie at the depth of ten miles, we may easily conceive that before they can be uplifted to the day several distinct series of earthquakes must occur, and between each of these there might usually be one or many

periods of tranquillity. The time required for so great a development of subterranean movements might well be protracted until the deposition of a series of sedimentary rocks, equal in extent to all our secondary and tertiary formations, had taken place.

The relative age, therefore, of the *visible* plutonic and metamorphic rocks, as compared to the unaltered sedimentary strata, must always be determined by the relations of two forces—the power which uplifts the hypogene rocks, and that aqueous agency which degrades and renovates the earth's surface; or, in other words, the relative age must depend on the quantity of aqueous action which takes place between two periods—that during which the heated and melted rocks are cooled and consolidated in the nether regions, and that of their emergence at the earth's surface.

Volume of hypogene rocks supposed to have been formed since the Eocene period.—If we were to indulge in speculations on the probable quantity of hypogene formations, both stratified and unstratified, which may have been formed beneath Europe and the European seas since the commencement of the Eocene period, it might be conjectured that the mass has equalled, if not exceeded in volume, the entire European continent. The grounds of this opinion will be understood by reference to what I have said of the causes which may have upheaved part of Sicily to its present height above the level of the sea since the beginning of the Newer Pliocene period.* If the theory which, in that instance, attributes the disturbance and upheavings of the superficial strata to the action of subterranean heat be deemed admissible, the same argument will apply with no less force to every other district, elevated or depressed, since the commencement of the tertiary period.

But the remarks on the Map of Europe, in the first book, have shown, that the conversion of sea into land, since the Eocene period, embraces an area equal to the greater part of Europe; and that even those tracts which had in part emerged before the Eocene era, such as the Alps, Apennines, and other mountain-chains, have risen to the additional altitude of from one thousand to four thousand feet since that era. I have also suggested the probability of a great amount of subsidence, and the conversion of considerable portions of European land into sea, during the same period,—changes which may be supposed to arise from the influence of subterranean heat.

From these premises we may conclude, that the liquefaction and alteration of rocks, by the operation of volcanic heat at successive periods, has extended over a subterranean space, equal at least in area to the present European continent, and has often pervaded a portion of the earth's crust four thousand feet or more in thickness.

* See ante, p. 266.

The principal effect of these volcanic operations in the nether regions, during the tertiary periods, or since the existing species began to flourish, has been to heave up to the surface hypogene formations of an age anterior to the carboniferous. The repetition of another series of movements, of equal violence, might upraise the plutonic and metamorphic rocks of many of the secondary periods; and if the same force should still continue to act, the next convulsions might bring up the *tertiary* and *recent* hypogene rocks; by which time we may imagine that nearly all the sedimentary strata now in sight would either have been destroyed by the action of water, or have assumed the metamorphic structure, or would have been melted down into plutonic and volcanic rocks.

At the end of this chapter will be found a table of the chronological relations of the principal divisions of rocks, according to the views above set forth. The sketch is confessedly imperfect; but it will elucidate the theory above suggested, of the connexion which may exist between the hypogene rocks of different periods, and the alluvial, volcanic, and sedimentary formations.

Concluding Remarks.

In the history of the progress of geology, it has been stated that the opinion originally promulgated by Hutton, "that the strata called *primitive* were mere altered sedimentary rocks," was vehemently opposed for a time, on the ground of its supposed tendency to promote a belief in the past eternity of our planet.* Before that period the absence of animal and vegetable remains in the so-called primitive strata had been appealed to, as proving that there had been an era when the planet was uninhabited by living beings, and when, as was also inferred, it was uninhabitable, and, therefore, probably in a nascent state.

The opposite doctrine, that the oldest visible strata might be the monuments of an antecedent period, when the animate world was already in existence, was declared to be equivalent to the assumption that there never was a beginning to the present order of things. The unfairness of this charge was clearly pointed out by Playfair, who observed, "that it was one thing to declare that we had not yet discovered the traces of a beginning, and another to deny that the earth ever had a beginning."

I regret, however, to find that the bearing of my arguments in the first book has been misunderstood in a similar manner; for I have been charged with endeavouring to establish the proposition, that "the existing causes of change have operated with absolute uniformity from all eternity."†

It is the more necessary to notice this misrepresentation of my views, as it has proceeded from a friendly critic, whose theoretical opinions

* Vol. I. p. 71.

† Quarterly Review, No. 86., Oct. 1830, p. 464.

coincide in general with my own ; but who has, in this instance, strangely misconceived the scope of the argument. With equal justice might an astronomer be accused of asserting that the works of creation extended throughout *infinite* space, because he refuses to take for granted that the remotest stars now seen in the heavens are on the utmost verge of the material universe. Every improvement of the telescope has brought thousands of new worlds into view ; and it would, therefore, be rash and unphilosophical to imagine that we already survey the whole extent of the vast scheme, or that it will ever be brought within the sphere of human observation.

But no argument can be drawn from such premises in favour of the infinity of the space that has been filled with worlds ; and if the material universe has any limits, it then follows that it must occupy a minute and infinitesimal point in infinite space.

So if, in tracing back the earth's history, we arrive at the monuments of events which may have happened millions of ages before our times, and if we still find no decided evidence of a commencement, yet the arguments from analogy in support of the probability of a beginning remain unshaken ; and if the past duration of the earth be finite, then the aggregate of geological epochs, however numerous, must constitute a mere moment of the past, a mere infinitesimal portion of eternity.

It has been argued, that, as the different states of the earth's surface, and the different species by which it has been inhabited, have all had their origin, and many of them their termination, so the entire series may have commenced at a certain period. It has also been urged, that, as we admit the creation of man to have occurred at a comparatively modern epoch—as we concede the astonishing fact of the first introduction of a moral and intellectual being—so also we may conceive the first creation of the planet itself.

I am far from denying the weight of this reasoning from analogy ; but, although it may strengthen our conviction, that the present system of change has not gone on from eternity, it cannot warrant us in presuming that we shall be permitted to behold the signs of the earth's origin, or the evidences of the first introduction into it of organic beings. We aspire in vain to assign limits to the works of creation in *space*, whether we examine the starry heavens, or that world of minute animalcules which is revealed to us by the microscope. We are prepared, therefore, to find that in *time* also the confines of the universe lie beyond the reach of mortal ken. But in whatever direction we pursue our researches, whether in time or space, we discover every where the clear proofs of a Creative Intelligence, and of His foresight, wisdom, and power.

As geologists, we learn that it is not only the present condition of the globe which has been suited to the accommodation of myriads of living

creatures, but that many former states also have been adapted to the organization and habits of prior races of beings. The disposition of the seas, continents, and islands, and the climates, have varied; the species likewise have been changed; and yet they have all been so modelled, on types analogous to those of existing plants and animals, as to indicate throughout a perfect harmony of design and unity of purpose. To assume that the evidence of the beginning or end of so vast a scheme lies within the reach of our philosophical inquiries, or even of our speculations, appears to be inconsistent with a just estimate of the relations which subsist between the finite powers of man and the attributes of an Infinite and Eternal Being.

TABLE II.

Showing the Relations of the Alluvial, Aqueous, Volcanic, and Hypogene Formations of different Ages.

Periods.	Formations.	Some of the Localities where the Formations occur.
I. RECENT.	A. Table I. ante, p. 453.	
	Alluvial. - - - - -	{ Beds of existing rivers, &c. book iii. ch. xiv.
	Aqueous. { a. Marine.	{ Coral reefs of the Pacific, book iii. ch. xviii.
	{ b. Freshwater.	{ Bed of lake Superior, &c., book ii. ch. iv.
	Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Etna, Vesuvius, book ii. chs. x. xi. xii.
II. TERTIARY.	Hypogene. { a. Plutonic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; foci of active volcanos, book iv. ch. xxvi.
	{ b. Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; around the foci of active volcanos, book iv. ch. xxvii.
	1. Newer Pliocene. B. Table I. ante, p. 453.	
	Alluvial. - - - - -	{ Gravel covering the Newer Pliocene strata of Sicily.
	Aqueous. { a. Marine.	{ Val di Noto, Sicily.
	{ b. Freshwater.	{ Colle, in Tuscany.
	Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Val di Noto, Sicily.
	Hypogene. { a. Plutonic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; foci of Newer Pliocene volcanos—underneath the Val di Noto, ante, p. 266, and book iv. ch. xxvii.
	{ b. Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; near the foci of Newer Pliocene volcanos—underneath the Val di Noto, ante, p. 266, and book iv. ch. xxvii.
	2. Older Pliocene. C. Table I. ante, p. 453.	
	Alluvial. - - - - -	{ Norfolk? ante, p. 317.
	Aqueous. { a. Marine.	{ Subapennine formations, ante p. 300.
	{ b. Freshwater.	{ Near Sienna, ante, p. 304.
	Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Tuscany, ante p. 303.
	Hypogene. { a. Plutonic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; foci of Older Pliocene volcanos—beneath Tuscany.
	{ b. Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; probably near the same foci.
	3. Miocene. D. Table I. ante, p. 453.	
	Alluvial. - - - - -	{ Mont Perrier, Auvergne—Orleanais, ante, pp. 352. 354.
	Aqueous. { a. Marine.	{ Bordeaux. Dax.
	{ b. Freshwater.	{ Saucats, near Bordeaux, ante, p. 344.
	Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Hungary, ante, p. 356.
	Hypogene. { a. Plutonic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; foci of Miocene volcanos—beneath Hungary.
	{ b. Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; probably around the same foci.

TABLE II.—*continued.*

Periods.		Formations.	Some of the Localities where the Formations occur.
II. TERTIARY— <i>continued.</i>	4. Eocene. E. Table I. ante, p. 453.	Alluvial. - - - - -	{ Summit of North and South Downs, ante, p. 428, 429.
		Aqueous. { <i>a.</i> Marine. { <i>b.</i> Freshwater.	{ Paris and London basins. Isle of Wight—Auvergne.
		Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Ronca, Vicentine, ante, p. 398; oldest volcanic rocks of the Limagne d'Auvergne, book iv. ch. xix.
		Hypogene. { <i>a.</i> Plutonic. { <i>b.</i> Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; foci of Eocene volcanos —beneath Vicentine and the Li- magne d'Auvergne. { <i>Concealed</i> ; probably near the same foci.
III. SECONDARY.	1. Cretace- ous group. F. Table I. ante, p. 454.	Alluvial.	{
		Aqueous. { <i>a.</i> Marine. { <i>b.</i> Freshwater.	{ Wiltshire, North Downs. Flambo- rough Head.
		Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Northern Flanks of the Pyrenees? Near Dax?
		Hypogene. { <i>a.</i> Plutonic. { <i>b.</i> Metamorphic.	{
	2. Wealden group. G. Table I. ante, p. 454.	Alluvial. - - - - -	{ Portland "Dirt bed" (containing pebbles).
		Aqueous. { <i>a.</i> Marine. { <i>b.</i> Freshwater.	{ Weald of Surrey, Kent, and Sussex, book iv. ch. xxi.
		Volcanic. - - - - -	{
		Hypogene. { <i>a.</i> Plutonic. { <i>b.</i> Metamorphic.	{
	3. Oolite group. H. Table I. ante, pp. 454, 455.	Alluvial.	{ Oxford. Bath. Jura chain.
		Aqueous. { <i>a.</i> Marine. { <i>b.</i> Freshwater.	{
		Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Hebrides?
		Hypogene. { <i>a.</i> Plutonic. { <i>b.</i> Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; beneath the Hebrides.
	4. Lias group. I. Table I. ante, p. 455.	Alluvial.	{
		Aqueous. { <i>a.</i> Marine. { <i>b.</i> Freshwater.	{ Lyme Regis. Whitby. Aberthaw.
		Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Hebrides?
		Hypogene. { <i>a.</i> Plutonic. { <i>b.</i> Metamorphic.	{ Alps? book iv. ch. xxvii. Valorsine in Savoy.
	5. New Red Sandstone and Mag- nesian limestone group. K. & L. Table I. ante, p. 455.	Alluvial.	{
		Aqueous. { <i>a.</i> Marine. { <i>b.</i> Freshwater.	{ Cheshire. Staffordshire. Vosges. Westphalia. (Muschelkalk.)
		Volcanic. - - - - -	{ Near Exeter. Devon.
		Hypogene. { <i>a.</i> Plutonic. { <i>b.</i> Metamorphic.	{ <i>Concealed</i> ; beneath Devonshire?

TABLE II.—*continued.*

Periods.	Formations.	Some of the Localities where the Formations occur.
III. SECONDARY— <i>continued.</i>	6. Carboniferous and Old Red Sandstone group. M. & N. Table I. ante, p. 456.	
	Alluvial.	Clifton, Mendip, Edinburgh.
	Aqueous. { a. Marine.	Coal measures of North of England and near Edinburgh.
	{ b. Freshwater.	Forfarshire. Edinburgh. Fife.
IV. TRANSITION.	Volcanic. - - - - -	Durham. High Teesdale.
	Hypogene. { a. Plutonic.	Concealed; beneath Edinburgh, Northumberland, Durham.
	{ b. Metamorphic.	Near the Plutonic rocks of the same period.
	7. Silurian & Greywacké group. O. & P. Table I. ante, p. 456.	
V. PRIMARY ROCKS.*	Alluvial.	Wenlock. Shropshire.
	Aqueous. { a. Marine.	Shropshire.
	{ b. Freshwater.	Concealed; beneath Shropshire.
	Volcanic. - - - - -	Near the Plutonic rocks of the same period.
	Hypogene. { Plutonic.	Probably all destroyed by denudation, or converted into hypogene.
	{ Metamorphic.	Perhaps a considerable part of the granite now visible.
		Probably a large proportion of the gneiss, mica-schist, and other stratified crystalline rocks now visible.

* By primary formations are meant those, whether stratified or unstratified, which are older than the most ancient European rocks (the transition or greywacké), in which distinct fossils have as yet been discovered.

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J. B. WALKER."

WALKER'S GEOMETRY.

DESIGN OF THE WORK.

The design of this work is to furnish a cheap and easy introduction to the principles of Geometry. It is written expressly for young students, and contains all the propositions necessary for understanding the subsequent part of a mathematical course. The style of demonstration is familiar, and the matter is compressed within as small a compass as perspicuity would allow. The definitions are placed immediately before the magnitudes defined, and the problems immediately after the theorems upon which they depend. The Introduction contains a brief history of Geometry. The body of the work is divided into four sections: the first treating of Lines and their relations; the second of Surfaces and their areas; and the third, of Solids and their measures; the fourth is designed to illustrate the uses of Geometry by some of its most important practical applications, and also gives a description of the instruments used in mensuration. To impress the fundamental propositions more deeply on the memory, they are collected together at the end, with a series of Questions for the exercise of the learner.

NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

From the North American Review.—"The book before us contains the elements of Geometry, moulded to that form, which some years of practical acquaintance with the art of teaching suggested as the best. The author's plan is simple and natural; his explanations are clear; his original demonstrations are ingenious; and his illustrations easy and familiar. He has condensed into 132 pages duodecimo more geometrical truth than we had supposed it possible to bring into so narrow limits, and all that is essential to be taught in ordinary mathematical instruction. We recommend his treatise as well adapted to the purpose for which it was designed, and calculated to supply a desideratum in our schools."

From the Journal of Education.—"It seems to us a book which will do for Geometry what Colburn's Treatise did for Algebra—make a science hitherto esteemed dry and uninteresting, popular among the youth of both sexes. We shall hope, therefore, to see this work in general use."

From the United States Gazette.—"To every teacher and pupil who have found in the pages of Euclid and Legendre, much that is too abstruse for the youthful comprehension, as well as much that is not requisite in the more important practical applications—this work must commend itself, for the small compass into which the essential principles of Geometry have been condensed, for the simplicity as well as originality of many of its definitions and demonstrations, and for the admirable arrangement of its matter. Such a work cannot fail of finding its way into general use."

From Professor A. D. Bache, of the University of Pennsylvania.—"I have examined with pleasure the work on Geometry by T. Walker, Esq., entitled, 'Elements of Geometry, with practical applications, for the use of Schools.' It seems to me a concise work, well adapted for the instruction of youth in the Geometry of Lines, Surfaces, and Solids. This opinion is the result of an examination without the test of use in teaching. This test, however, I learn the work has stood, and the call for a new edition of it speaks with authority in its favour."

